# Chronicles

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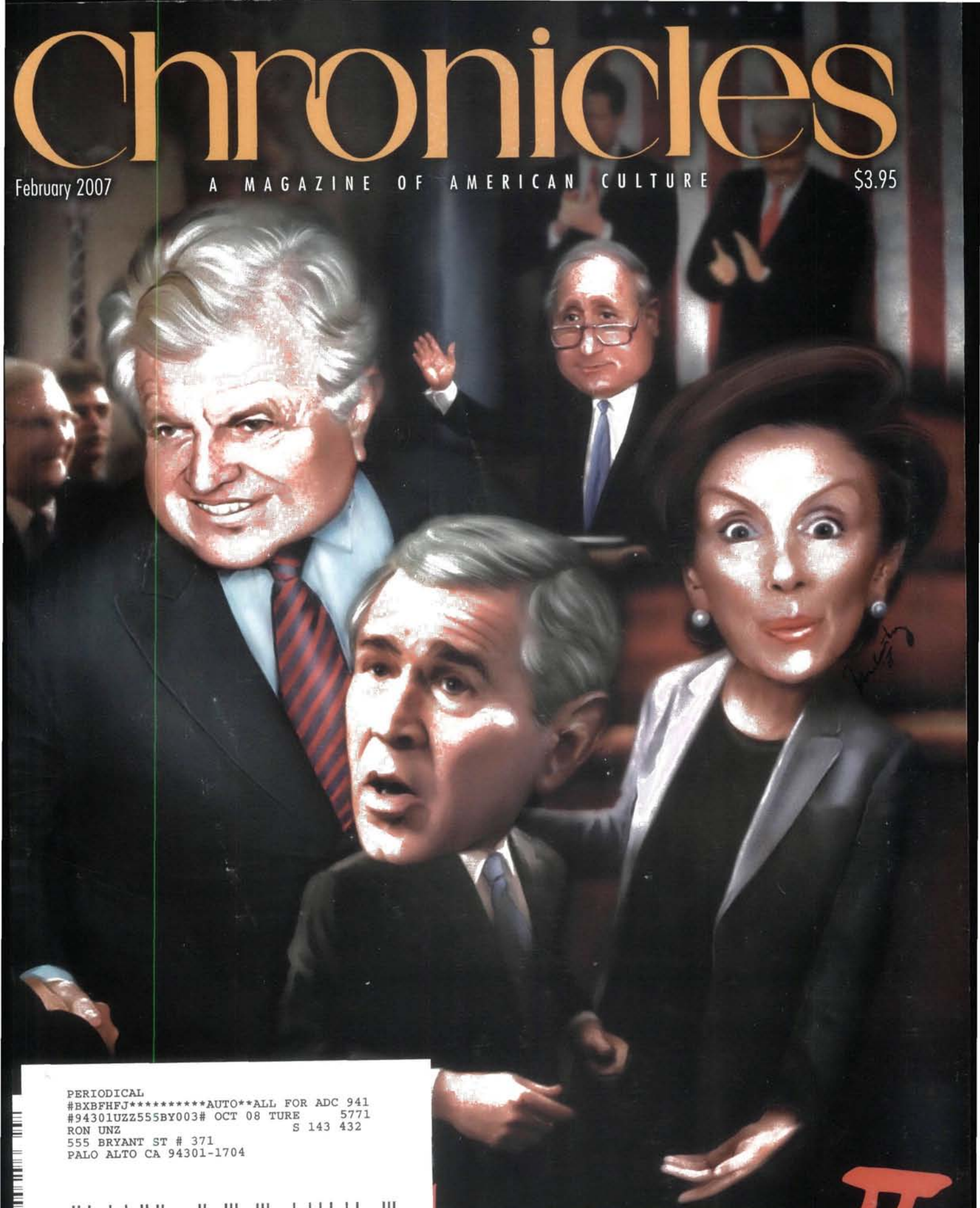

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## THE Leaders THEY DESERVE II

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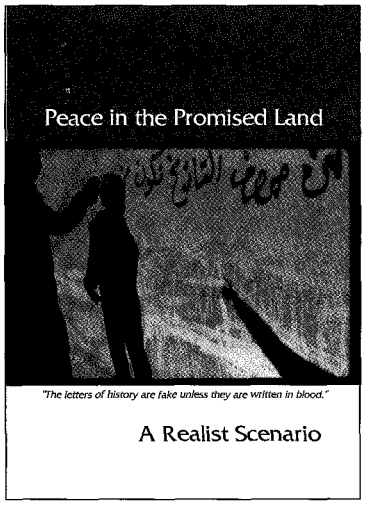
**—From the Foreword**

# Peace in the Promised Land: A Realist Scenario

## *edited by Srdja Trifkovic*

featuring chapters by Middle Eastern experts, *Chronicles* editors, and scholars Thomas Fleming, Michael Stenton, Leon Hadar, Srdja Trifkovic, Aaron D. Wolf, Paul Gottfried, Wayne Allensworth, David A. Hartman, Doug Bandow, Stephen B. Presser, and Ivan Eland, as well as color maps, source documents, and a selected bibliography




Few issues in American foreign policy evoke more emotion than U.S support for Israel. With the death of Yasser Arafat and a new centrist coalition in Israel, however, it is time to reconsider the question, "What is the American interest in this conflict?"

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## On True Finns

In the December issue of *Chronicles*, Edward Dutton writes about the peculiar self-censorship that characterizes Finnish political and cultural life ("Letter From Finland: Finland, Democracy, and Those Cartoons," *Correspondence*). This reality was confirmed as the magazine was likely going to press, when the Finnish prime minister told journalists that they should not ask government ministers whether they have paid their TV-license fees or hired illegal workers, since a politician's lawfulness has to be assumed, and such questions are "hurtful" and "improper."

Modern political correctness aside, the uneasiness with dissenting opinions in Finland has been a complex phenomenon, relating to national characteristics, political threats, and other factors. Disagreements have often been more hidden here than in other countries. There are, however, a couple of objections to Dr. Dutton's article that I must register.

Dr. Dutton's attempt to trace the roots of this climate in the interwar period is incorrect. Historians disagree about whether the nationalist, anticommunist Lapua movement should be defined as fascist. Only at the end of its existence could this be said of it. It was not "persuaded to back down" by President Svinhufvud; the president had it outlawed. Neither was he their protégé; he used them for his own purposes. As a matter of fact, few of the young nations of Europe were as successful in resisting fascism as Finland was. The idea that Finland fought off Soviet invasion in the Winter War by "violently suppressing any dissenting opinions" is news to me. It is also highly misleading to say that, after the war, Finland was only "in theory, still within the West." In some respects, she was outside the West, but, in most respects, she was (and is) more conservative than, for instance, neighboring Sweden.

As a Swedish-speaking Finn, I take strong exception to Dr. Dutton's account of our status, which is heavily influenced by the perspectives of the populist True Finns—a seductive, but not very fruitful, source regarding political correctness. The rights we enjoy are prescriptive rights affirming our essential role in the history of Finland and our desire to carry on our inherited culture. Any account of our situation has to take into consideration our millennium-long presence in the country, as well as the fact that an overwhelmingly Swedish-speaking heartland is home to many of us. Ascribing an appeal to abstract rights to us (if that is what Dutton intended) is simply false.

As to the requirement that all Finns study Swedish at school, we must remember that an important part of our culture is Swedish, and that Swedish is spoken in our neighboring country and understood throughout Scandinavia.

Dr. Dutton's reliance on the True Finns explains some factual errors. It is not true that a certain portion of public-sector jobs are reserved for Swedish speakers. Neither is it true that it is impossible to get work unless you can speak Swedish in towns where Swedish speakers number only eight percent. I have lived for several years in Turku, Finland's gate to the West, and regularly had difficulties obtaining service in Swedish in the public sector.

The Karelian evacuees were settled all over the Finnish-speaking parts of Finland in 1944. Towns with Swedish-speaking majorities, however, paid a special tax to compensate for not having to receive permanent inhabitants. I cannot see why history textbooks should bother to write about that. If you want to keep your culture intact, it is crucial not to weaken the demographic structure in favor of the majority population, as the experience of southern Finland shows. The mentality of Swedish-speaking Finns entails politely yielding for Finnish speakers—some of the latter complain that they never get an opportunity to exercise their Swedish, since the former insist on speaking Finnish with them—and that makes it all the more important to have solid Swedish-speaking environments, where linguistic continuity can be guaranteed.

*—Joakim Förars*
*Vasa, Finland*

## Dr. Dutton Replies:

Mr. Förars presents an interesting critique. With regard to his criticisms of my historical discussion, I assume that he and I have read somewhat different historical literature containing different de-



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grees of nuance and caution. Mr. Förars argues that my assertion that Finland was, during the Cold War, in the West only in theory is misleading. I should clarify this. Unlike Soviet satellite states, Finland was perceived at the time to be "one of us," a democracy. With regard to the evacuation, I would argue that the failure of certain Swedish-speaking towns to accept evacuees is important because it would seem to demonstrate that Finland Swedes placed maintaining their linguistic power in a certain area ahead of assisting "fellow Finns."

Mr. Förars argues that the privileges afforded Swedish speakers in Finland affirm their essential role in that nation's history. I suggest that such rights affirm the Finland Swedes' essential role in the history of Finland as the Finnish aristocracy. Thus, I find his summary both trenchant and revealing. In England, when Tony Blair removed the hereditary peers from the House of Lords, one of the arguments for their retention was that their families had played an essential role in the country's history. (They represented the establishment.) The almost constant presence of the Swedish People's Party in Finnish coalitions might be seen as a parallel to the original role of the House of Lords in the United Kingdom.

I do not find Mr. Förars' justifications for compulsory Swedish in Finnish schools especially persuasive. Swedish is not part of Finnish culture. I would strongly suggest that Finnishness is defined in relation to an "other," which is Swedishness. Swedish is not understood throughout Scandinavia. English is understood throughout Scandinavia, except in Finland, where the standard of English is worse than in neighboring countries because of the obscurity of Finnish and, perhaps, wasting time at school learning Swedish, which is never used. Moreover, Finns are taught Finland Swedish, so that, when they go to Sweden, they often find it difficult to communicate effectively. Finns learn Swedish at school because it is the language of the elite. Being forced to learn this language is a symbol of the power of Finland Swedes, which explains why certain Finland Swedes vehemently oppose making the study of Swedish voluntary.

Mr. Förars disputes my assertions about Swedish-speakers in the workplace. Yet there is a Swedish section in Finland's national broadcasting corporation, and you have to know Swedish to be a senior civil servant. In Kokkola, where Finnish is spoken by 82 percent of the people, you have to be fluent in Swedish to work as a nurse.

The fact that True Finns advocates a certain point of view doesn't mean that the point of view is inaccurate, even if, as one Swedish-speaking acquaintance put it, the True Finns are "the rednecks of Finland."

I sincerely hope that I have not offended Mr. Förars—or any other Finland Swede—with my article. I have found Finland Swedes to be exceptionally amiable—far more so than the somewhat taciturn Finnish speakers. My concern is that even a discussion of abolishing compulsory Swedish in Finland's schools is off limits. Finland is a fascinating country, and the Finland Swedes, a rather successful minority. But the language issue there is persuasive evidence that Finland is still considerably less free than her neighbors.

## On the Devil's Music

While I found Aaron D. Wolf's "Solemn Joy and Hot Gospel" (*Heresies*, December) lively and diverting, in one small point I beg to differ. Larry Norman took the title for his song "Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?" not from Martin Luther but from Salvation Army founder William Booth. However, Norman would agree with some of Wolf's insights on Contemporary Christian Music, judging from the interview with him that was published in the December 2005 issue of *Gilbert Magazine*, published by the American Chesterton Society. Those interested may read it at *alivingdog.com/LarryInt2.html*.

—*Gord Wilson*
*Bellingham, WA*

### Mr. Wolf Replies:

My thanks to Mr. Wilson for drawing attention to William Booth and Larry Norman. In all likelihood, Luther did not utter the precise phrase, "Why should the Devil have all the good music?"—although, as I explained in my article, it is understandable why so many attribute the phrase to him.

William Booth did precisely say, "Why should the Devil have all the good tunes?" after hearing "Bless His Name, He Sets Me Free" successfully set to "Champaign Charlie Is My Name." Indeed, the idea behind Christian rock, setting "Christian words" to popular music, is not new. The so-called Second Great Awakening, led by Charles Finney, was known for its lively popular music, and those who have heard the hymnody prominently used throughout the 20th century in Baptist and Methodist churches may have recognized a musical structure undeniably similar to the romantic tunes of the late 19th and early 20th century. (Listen to "Saved, Saved, Saved!" or "He Keeps Me Singing" or "In the Garden," for example.) Christian rock, or Contemporary Christian Music, is just a continuation of that tradition among evangelicals (and now just about everyone else).

Larry Norman, as Mr. Wilson points out, is quite disgusted with the genre he helped to create. It is difficult to imagine how a man so well read in George Macdonald, C.S. Lewis, Hilaire Belloc, and Chesterton could stomach the CCM industry, which, among its many sins, markets Christianity like bric-a-brac. Norman's former brother-in-law, Dale Ahlquist, did this generation of Gospel rockers a favor by giving Mr. Norman a forum in which to denounce such marketing as a "lie." "Pretend it's just an afterthought that you are explaining Christianity to them and assuming the Holy Spirit will honor this deception."

Still, we should consider what Christian rock was before it was perverted by the "industry" in 1973 (in Mr. Norman's reckoning). Mr. Norman is unhappy that the devilishly entertaining rapture movie *A Thief in the Night* used his rapture anthem "I Wish We'd All Been Ready" as a "scare tactic." Fair enough: But that doesn't absolve him from writing the song in the first place.

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*by Scott P. Richert*

# By Their Fruits

Is a lone wolf any less a wolf because he is alone? An eight-year-old boy could answer that question correctly, but many adults apparently cannot.

Here in Rockford, Illinois, on December 3, just as the "holiday shopping season" was in full swing, Derrick (a.k.a. "Talib Abu Salam Ibn") Shareef was arrested by the FBI in the parking lot of Wal-Mart, where he was attempting to swap two stereo speakers for four hand grenades and a 9 mm handgun. He intended to use the grenades—and, if necessary, the gun—just a mile down the road, at the CherryVale Mall, the largest shopping center in the Rockford area. Unfortunately for him, the "seller" was an FBI agent.

Shareef's plans were foiled (and partially sparked, at least in the details) by a "confidential source" who has worked with the FBI before and who (it seems reasonable to assume, based on details in an FBI affidavit entered at Shareef's arraignment) came into contact with Shareef while monitoring the activities of Muslims in Northern Illinois.

The circumstances of the contact are important because, when the arrest was announced on December 8, federal prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald and the FBI stressed that Shareef was a "lone wolf," that he was not working with others locally, and that he was not receiving funding or direction from overseas. The point was to reassure Christmas shoppers and others in Rockford that there was no further danger stemming from this particular plot.

And Fitzgerald and the FBI were probably right.

But the media and most commentators did not take those comments in the limited way in which they were intended. If there was no Al Qaeda connection, they reasoned, then Shareef wasn't really a terrorist, his stated desire to "wage violent jihad" notwithstanding. Post-September 11, Al Qaeda has a monopoly: "If it ain't Al Qaeda, it ain't terror.™"

That's why we're continually informed that, "Since September 11, there have been no other acts of terrorism on American soil." Not the attack on the El Al counter at the Los Angeles International Airport by Hesham Mohamed Hadayet in July 2002; not the sniper shootings of John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo, which began in October 2002; not Naveed Afzal Haq's assault on the Seattle Jewish Federation in July 2006. Nor even the case of Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, who was convicted in November 2005 of plotting to assassinate President George W. Bush.

Moreover, if Shareef was not working with others locally, the logic ran (out), then local Muslims are just good, solid Americans, like Episcopalians and evangelicals. Once Sheik Shpendim Nadzaku at the Rockford mosque has said that no one over there has had contact with Derrick Shareef, it's unfair to discuss the views of the president of the mosque, Dr. Khalid Siddiqui, who looks forward to the day when *sharia* will be imposed in the United States and who expressed admiration for Osama bin Laden—five months after September 11.

Words are just words; if Siddiqui's coreligionist attempts to translate the same words that Siddiqui uses into action, surely that's no grounds for questioning Siddiqui's loyalty to the United States. Nor should we be concerned that Siddiqui has said that, if a *jihad* were declared against the United States, Muslims in America would have two options: Renounce their citizenship and go over to the other side or become conscientious objectors. After all, that's simply freedom of religion. Isn't that what made this country great?

And finally, if Shareef is a "lone wolf," then, even if his religious beliefs were the force behind his action, those beliefs are his and his alone (or so the media "reported"). He may claim to be a Muslim, and his growing interest in "violent jihad" may have coincided with his journey from Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam to "mainstream" Islam, but his Islam is not the Islam of any other Muslim because "Islam is a religion of peace." And all other Muslims understand that—except, maybe, for those other "lone wolves" who don't. And Hamas and Hezbollah and Al Qaeda. And those Sunni "insurgents" in Iraq, and Ahmadinejad's Shiites in Iran, and the Islamic Court militias in Somalia . . .

Of course, it is true that Shareef, and Shareef alone, is responsible for his actions, legally and existentially. But that fact tells us nothing that justifies the conclusions to which the local media and commentators all too eagerly jumped.

The reality is that we Americans are good liberals, tolerant to a fault. After *Chronicles* published my account of the visit Aaron Wolf and I made to the local Islamic school and mosque in February 2002 ("Through a Glass, Darkly," *The Rockford Files*, April 2002), I went on Wisconsin Public Radio to discuss the article. An angry caller accused me of misrepresenting Islam. "You said that they want to impose *sharia* in the United States. That's not true." When I pointed out that Dr. Siddiqui told us that, "If you look at the Constitution, it is a pure Islamic constitution," restricting the power of men and leaving room for the institution of *sharia*, the caller indignantly replied, "He may have said that, but he doesn't mean it."

Even the Christians among us want to regard Islam as just another religion—"like Catholicism, Lutheranism, Presbyterianism"—and welcome Muslim believers to take their place in the "broader faith-based community." Muslims may have advanced by the sword far into Europe before being turned back starting 500 years ago, but "We Christians burned witches and fought Crusades and tortured heretics." Who are we to point fingers?

Who are we, indeed. That is the literal crux of the issue. It does no good to blame Muslims for the actions of Derrick Shareef, even if the increased presence of immigrant Muslims eased his transition from the Nation of Islam to "mainstream" Islam, where he came to his understanding of *jihad*. The fault lies entirely with us. If we weren't Americans in name only, we might have the strength of will to close our borders to those who come from a cultural tradition alien to ours.

And if we weren't Christians in name only, we might be able to proclaim the truth that Islam is not an acceptable alternative to Christianity but a religious ideology which is perfectly willing to take advantage of the American tradition of religious freedom to establish a foothold here, in preparation for one day adding this continent to the *Dar al-Islam*.

How many lone wolves does it take to make a pack?



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## THE SHIITE GALLOWS

To taunt and curse a condemned man who is about to meet his Maker is one of the lowest forms of human depravity. The practice, commonly associated with lynching, brings to mind the quasijudicial bestialities of Dzerzhinsky and Roland Freisler's Volksgerichtshof, Parisian *tricoteuses*, and various ethno-tribal atrocities down through the ages.

The hanging of Saddam Hussein in the early hours of December 30 evoked all of the above. The vindictive gloating of his executioners, clad in black leather jackets and balaklava helmets like members of a death squad, was captured on a clandestine camera. They shouted, "Go to hell!" as the deposed dictator stood on the gallows with the noose around his neck. Hardly audible above the uproar, but standing erect and composed, Saddam responded by condemning the "traitors" and the "gallows of shame." An official was heard appealing for calm, but the Shiite guards and witnesses responded by chanting, "Moqtada! Moqtada! Moqtada!"—the name of the radical Shiite cleric whose private militia has killed hundreds of Sunni Arabs and whose supporters are believed to have infiltrated Iraq's security services. "Moqtada," Saddam replied, smiling contemptuously. "Is this how real men behave?"

The mayhem continued through the execution itself. A shout of "The tyrant has fallen! May Allah curse him!" was heard as Saddam's body swung lifeless, his neck broken and his eyes popped out. On balance, as the *New York Times* has noted, Saddam—a mass murderer—appeared dignified and restrained, and his executioners, representing the Shiites who were his principal victims, looked like bullying street thugs.

It was an ugly spectacle but worthy of the judicial process preceding it. Its integrity was compromised from the outset when Ahmad Chalabi, now disgraced but still on the Iraqi Governing Council at the time of the former dictator's capture, made the unambiguous statement, "Saddam will be punished for his crimes": He did not qualify the statement with "if found guilty," and he did not have a jail sentence in mind. Mouwafak al-Rabii, a Shiite member of the council, added that Saddam should be "resurrected hundreds of times and killed again."

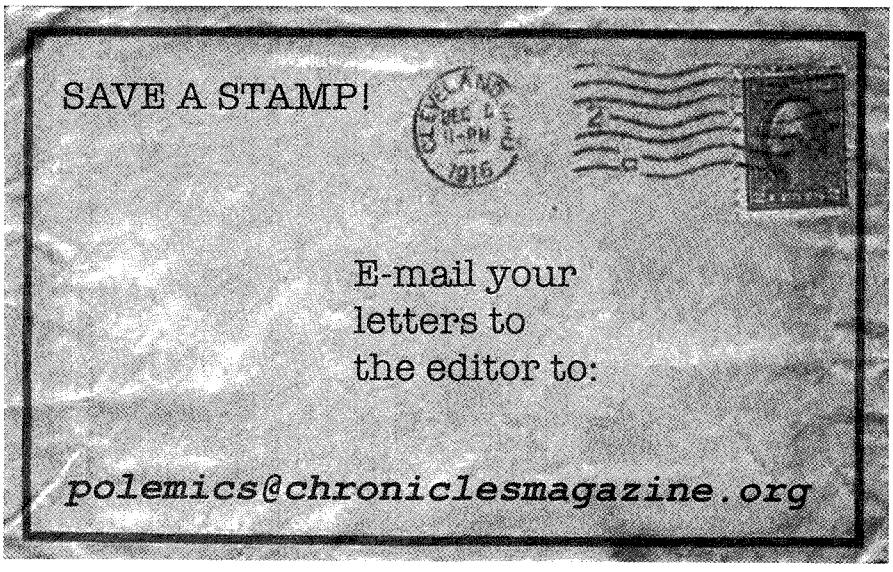
The trial itself was as good as their word. Rules for presenting evidence and introducing witnesses were improvised in a manner reminiscent of The Hague Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Political interference in the case never stopped: One presiding judge resigned in protest after being accused by the government of excessive leniency to the accused, and another was summarily fired by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki for the same reason. The court's independence was further undermined by the lack of protection for defense witnesses and lawyers, several of whom were killed by persons unknown but widely assumed to be connected to Moqtada and the Shiite-dominated Interior Ministry. Even the upholding of the death sentence was announced by Mouwafak al-Rubaie, Iraq's national-security advisor, before the appeals court itself had a chance to do so.

In the final week of December, Al-Maliki violated a series of constitutional, legal, and religious norms to ensure a speedy execution. Iraq's constitution demanded the approval of the hanging by the three-man presidency council. Yet President Jalal Talabani—who opposes the death sentence on principle and who, as a Kurd, wanted to see Saddam tried for additional crimes against his people—refused to sign the decree upholding the sentence. In addition, a Saddam-era law stipulated that no executions can be carried out during the Eid al-Adha holiday, which began for Iraqi Sunnis on December 30, and for Shiites on December 31. Al-Maliki "resolved" that problem by calling the *marjaiya*, the supreme religious council of Iraqi Shiites in Najaf. The ayatollahs duly decreed that the execution was in order.

In December 2003, at the time of Saddam's arrest, it was claimed in Washington that his trial by an Iraqi court would be "cathartic" and contribute to the country's stability. What the world witnessed instead, on December 30, was a scene paradigmatic of the country herself almost four years after "Operation Iraqi Freedom": a violent, lawless, hopelessly divided place that is doomed to sink deeper into a civil war.

Saddam's hanging will be remembered as a landmark event in the history of that war. The trial, and especially the execution, are now widely seen as Shiite revenge not only on Saddam but on his fellow Sunnis. The consequences are already clear. The sectarian strife is getting bloodier by the day, and a dignified American exit is even less likely than at this time last year. A viable exit strategy demands the development of a working rapport with Iraq's six million Sunnis, who provide the backbone of the insurgency. By seeing that they cannot expect fairness or justice from this or any other Shiite-dominated government, those Sunnis who have taken up arms will have their resolve stiffened; and many others will be more motivated than before to join their ranks.

Caught between the Sunni rock and the Shiite hard place—both of his own making—Mr. Bush has decided to throw



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in his lot with the Shiite majority. His partners, Mr. Al-Maliki included, are steeped in an Islamic ideology that would make the late Ayatollah Khomeini proud. They are controlled from Tehran more effectively than anyone in Washington wants to admit. They can hardly believe their luck that American arms, blood, and treasure have given them what they could never hope to achieve on their own. In the meantime, the war will continue, and, although we do not know how it will end, we can predict with near certainty that the winner will be Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

## CONSERVATIVES IN THE CREASE

Vice President Dick Cheney's lesbian daughter, Mary, found a way to impregnate herself so that she and her lover, Heather Poe, whom Mary met while playing ice hockey 15 years ago, can rear a child. Grandma is thrilled. "Dick and I both are very much looking forward to this new baby," said Lynne Cheney. Mary will be a "great mom." President Bush told *People* that he was happy to hear the "good news," adding, "I think Mary is going to be a loving soul to her child. And I'm happy for her."

So, it would seem, are *National Review*'s John Podhoretz and Jonah Goldberg. When Concerned Women for America's Janice Crouse called Mary's behavior "unconscionable," Podhoretz huffed, "This is disgusting. The birth of a child is never unconscionable. Adults who say such things about the impending birth of children are." Goldberg, who has "for years" endorsed civil unions for homosexuals, agreed and one-upped Podhoretz's *non sequitur*: "Count me as a member of the Pod camp when it comes to Mary Cheney. . . . My guess is that Mary's kid will do better in life than Britney's."

Mary Cheney's pregnancy is a logical step in the career of a woman who has already run the homosexual-outreach program for Coors and published a memoir of her life as a lesbian Republican. Next, she will serve as vice president for advocacy at AOL.

Whatever her intentions, Mary's deviant behavior is nothing less than an attack on the institution without which society cannot survive—the family. We live in an age when that word requires definition. *Contra* Barbara Bush, a family is not whatever you want it to be. The unnatural relationship of Mary and Heather is not a marriage. When the child is born, the three will not be a family. As Tolkien observed, evil cannot create; it can only mock.

The diabolical institution mocking conjugal unity and its purpose is the sperm bank, the likely source of Cheney's pregnancy. Like all of the post-Christian world's reproductive technologies, it is eugenic in nature and a thumbing of the nose at the divine plan for human procreation. That this plan is ordered to a natural end is made obvious in the mountain of data showing that a marriage built on mutual self-giving is the best environment for the mental and physical health of children. The plan is directed at a supernatural end as well: cooperation in the creative nature of God, which can only occur when the marital embrace is open to life.

The lesbian couple's need to use a sperm bank is a reminder of this divine plan: Two women are not equipped to bring life into the world. The fact that Mary Cheney still needed a man to become a mother has received scant attention from those heaping accolades on her for her courageous efforts on behalf of social progress.

That a father was required will become a matter of great concern, if only for Baby Cheney (or is it Baby Poe?), when the child realizes his household is abnormal. If he asks, Mary could tell him that he was the product of a gravely immoral laboratory procedure that allowed her and Miss Poe to realize their selfish desires.

She will not, of course. Nor will the proud grandparents, the President, or the editors of *National Review*. There is some chance the child will figure it out, however. Several days after Mary Cheney broke her happy news, a column appeared in the *Washington Post*. "My Father Was an Anonymous Sperm Donor" was written by Katrina Clark, a college freshman and one of 30,000 children who are conceived with the help of a sperm bank each year.

"When she was 32," wrote Katrina, "my mother allowed a doctor wearing rubber gloves to inject a syringe of sperm from an unknown man into her uterus so that she could have a baby. I am the result: a donor-conceived child." Then she exposes the horror of her existence. "[E]veryone focuses on the 'parents'—the adults who can make choices about their own lives. The recipient gets sympathy for wanting to have a child. The donor gets a guarantee of anonymity and absolution from any responsibility for the offspring of his 'donation.' As long as these adults are happy, then donor conception is a success, right?"

"Not so. The children born of these transactions are people, too. . . . I'm here to tell you that emotionally, many of us are not keeping up. We didn't ask to be born into this situation, with its limitations and confusion. It's hypocritical of parents and medical professionals to assume that biological roots won't matter to the 'products' of the cryobanks' service, when the longing for a biological relationship is what brings customers to the banks in the first place."

Perhaps Mary Cheney's baby, as Jonah Goldberg predicts, will fare better than Katrina. After all, if he plays ice hockey, he will have no shortage of coaches.

—*Christopher Check*

## IGNORING MANUFACTURING

Sen. Ted Kennedy's alleged "populism" and liberal policymakers' newfound embrace of states' rights are comic diversions in the ongoing debate surrounding the federal minimum wage. But the prize for most absurd should be awarded to Congress, which continues to give the American people the spectacle of political haranguing over an extra 70 cents per hour in wages in 2007. This, at a time when congressional leaders of both major parties continue to avoid the real issue: the loss of millions of jobs in a private-industry sector (manufacturing) where the average hourly earnings for nonsupervisory personnel in November were $16.91 per hour, which amounts to triple the federal minimum wage.

U.S. manufacturing employment, since its most recent peak nearly nine years ago (March 1998), has declined by 3.4 million jobs, a loss of nearly one in five positions in the sector. In the current U.S. economic expansion, which started in November 2001, manufacturing employment has declined by nearly 1.7 million jobs, the greatest decline in an expansion in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics time series, which dates to 1939. By contrast, manufacturing employment fell by 206,000 in the record ten-year expansion between March 1991 and March 2001. Losses this cycle have occurred in both Durable Goods and Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing. Some of the states hardest hit are in the industrial



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North, where five states (Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois) have lost a combined 1.05 million manufacturing jobs since peaking before the 2001 recession. The losses, in historical terms, are unprecedented and have contributed to Republican electoral losses in these states, as voters conclude that existing economic policies are not working. In 1998, these five states, with the exception of Indiana, all had Republican governors. A complete reversal has occurred: Today, the Hoosier State is the only one headed by a Republican.

There is little in the way of policy proposals to suggest that Democrats will do any better, having taken control of Congress last month. Have they announced plans to address the flawed tax, regulatory, trade, fiscal, and monetary policies that have all played a role in manufacturing's problems, which started during the presidency of Bill Clinton? No, the Democrats' fast-track proposal, sponsored by Senator Kennedy, is a $2.10 increase in the minimum wage over a three-year period, to $7.25 per hour. The current standard of $5.15 per hour has been in effect since September 1997, when it was increased from $4.75. Republicans argued then that any increase would price unskilled workers out of labor markets, an idea still debated by economists in academic journals. Eighteen states, however, now have minimum wages greater than the federal rate, leading Richard B. Freeman, a Harvard University labor economist, to tell the *New York Times* that "The left is uneasy about states' rights, but people are becoming more progressive at the local level. They can see what is happening to their neighbors, and they are more sympathetic toward the poor, whom they can also see." Kennedy told the *Times*, in a written statement, that "States have always been the laboratories of democracy, and I am proud of the leadership they have shown on this issue." He vows to continue pushing for a minimum greater than the $7.25 per hour supported by congressional Democrats.

The irony is that another New Deal legacy has been undermined. The federal minimum wage has its origins in FDR's National Industrial Recovery Act (1933) and the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938). One of FDR's policy goals was to have the federal government establish a wage floor. The federal government no longer serves that role. Instead of looking to Washington, D.C., Kennedy and other liberals must look to the state of Washington, which has the highest minimum ($7.63 per hour) in the United States.

—*Greg Kaza*

## OBITER DICTA

Our poet this month is **Catharine Savage Brosman**, professor *emerita* of French at Tulane University and honorary research professor at the University of Sheffield. She has published numerous works of poetry and prose, including her latest, *Range of Light*, which is due from LSU Press in March.

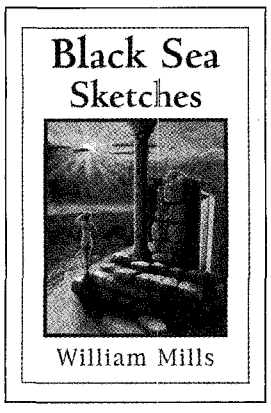
Our cover art is provided by our interior artist, **George McCartney, Jr.** Mr. McCartney studied at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and received a bachelor's of art from the State University of New York at Geneseo. Since 1997, he has worked in various media in the fields of illustration, graphic design, and textiles. George currently resides in North Carolina with his wife, Kristin, and his son, William.

Our interior art is provided by **Melanie Anderson** and **Nicholas Garrie**. Mrs. Anderson, our designer, received her B.F.A. from Northern Illinois University. Mr. Garrie, who works in a variety of media, hails from Rockford.


# Black Sea Sketches

**BLACK SEA SKETCHES** is a travel book written for serious travelers, including armchair travelers. Although the author may take an occasional swim or walk the beaches, the book is much more about the history and prehistory, the culture and the contemporary scene than about recreational opportunities. It is the kind of book you would want to read before or during your own travel in these fascinating countries.

The five countries—Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Georgia—often share military and economic history, but cultural contrasts abound: different alphabets and languages, different religions. While most of Ukraine, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Georgia embrace the Orthodox faith, Turkey is largely Muslim, as is part of the Crimean population. All five of the countries reflect, especially architecturally, the common past of ancient Greece and, most of them, of the later Genoan commercial empire.




Rising above the glittering monuments of the past, however, are the people Mills met and the stories of their lives, often of great courage under pressure and of generosity to a stranger and a traveler.

**Comments about other works of William Mills**

"William Mills' stories draw the reader deeply into the hearts and minds of men and women to reveal the essential nature of Man in a world governed by forces so primal there is no resisting their call, no mitigation of their judgment."

—Gordon Weaver

"Seldom have I found a contemporary poet so intensely and humanly convincing. Mills' voice is very near the fraternal and memorable sounds we all want to make, and say."

—James Dickey

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*by Thomas Fleming*

# Pigs Is Pigs

Politics is like the weather: No matter how blue in the face we talk ourselves, no matter how many virgins we sacrifice to Odin, our leaders do not improve, and the drought continues. The fates who determine the destinies of nations are no more obedient to our words than the little gods of wind and rain that ruin crops and spoil picnics. Every two years, an election cycle rolls through our part of the continent, and, like a late-summer low-pressure system that kicks up tornadoes, disrupts communications, and sends pigs and chickens into conniptions, this politicking raises our blood pressure and sours relations with friends and family—but nothing else.

From late summer until Election Day, my serene study of Gregory the Great's *Magna Moralia or Commentary on the Blessed Job* was interrupted by rumors of the political wars going on. Inevitably, I framed the issues in terms Saint Gregory might have understood. Poor Gregory (pope from 590 to 604) was caught between attacking barbarian Lombards and the unreliable Byzantine authorities who were supposed to protect Italy and the Church. What would Gregory think about the attacks we suffer from our own barbarians who threaten this ruined civilization (I mean, of course, the Democrats and other socialists) or, worse, the treachery of supposedly loyal allies, such as the emperor in Constantinople (or Washington, D.C.)? A Lombard is always a Lombard, I tell my friends, and a politician is always a politician. Our motto here is *Nolite confidere in principibus*, put not your trust in princes—particularly the princes who have to finance costly election campaigns.

One such interruption came from a wealthy caller who is still foolish enough to seek my advice. Though an octogenarian, he is still active in the business he founded; he is also a staunch conservative and, since the Goldwater campaign, a loyal Republican. The caller complained to me that George W. Bush has been an unmitigated disaster for the party and for the nation. Over the next two years, he insisted, our duty is to find a conservative third-party candidate to run against the evil Democrats and the just-as-evil leaders of the Stupid Party. In the midterm elections, however, he was voting straight-ticket Democrat just to teach the GOP a lesson.

Voting for the enemy is a foolish, maybe even a wicked, tactic—doing evil in the hopes that good may come of it—but I wonder, how many conservatives did something similar? My caller was not the only longtime Republican who told me he was voting for Democrats. Others took a more radical approach. My wife, from a staunch Republican background (I believe her parents voted for Herbert Hoover), picked whatever Green Party candidates were on the ballot. Here in Illinois, the Green Party gubernatorial candidate picked up 11 percent of the vote, mostly from frustrated members of the ruling parties. In Winnebago County, this socialist, as one Republican friend told me, got 24 percent.

The Democratic governor's administration is plagued by scandal, but his Republican challenger, a cross between Hillary Clinton and a wolverine, was a close associate of former governor George Ryan, convicted not so long ago on 18 counts of corruption. Sending governors to prison is one of Illinois' finest traditions, and the only one that connects us with the great state of Louisiana. The Land of Lincoln and Ryan and the Land of Long and Edwards are only outstanding examples of the American culture of political corruption. Corruption is the very lifeblood of party politics. In the best of times, the faction or party is, at best, "a conspiracy against the nation," as the Marquis of Halifax observed; in America today, the parties have taken the next step. They are, for the most part, criminal conspiracies.

Illinois voters could not possibly think that the demotion of Denny Hastert and the consequent promotion of Dick Durbin will do any real good. How could they? The Democrats voted to give the President the power to wage a war that some (if not all) of them knew was unjustifiable, and, as the war was mismanaged from the beginning and top officers were sacked, demoted, or disciplined for telling the truth, the Democrats were content to snipe at the President and the Miles Gloriosus he put in charge of the Department of Defense. At this stage of the game, they can only speak of a phased withdrawal without any consideration for the country we have ruined, for the damage being done to our prestige, or for the added risks our troops will run once we have given the insurgents the game plan. Do not ask me what to do. We said, some time before the war, what would happen if we invaded Iraq, and the fact that it has happened just as we predicted gives us no pleasure. We should have got out soon after we staged the pictures of the Iraqi flag coming down. Now, it is not so simple.

It would be nice to believe in the scenario that is being sketched out by some conservative Republicans in the aftermath of their much-needed defeat: The party has learned its lesson and, with a little effort, the policies of Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan will be restored. Moderate voters, confronted each night by the scary faces of Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid, and Dick Durbin, will rally round the conservative flag. "First we take back the party; then we take back the country. All that is required is a return to basic Republican principles." I sincerely hope they are right, but there are considerable roadblocks on the road to reform.

Some alcoholics, stricken with the remorse that only a hangover can cause, quit drinking every morning, but after two beers at lunch and a few cocktails before dinner, they postpone their reform to a more convenient occasion. There may be more, though perhaps not better, reasons for going to bed drunk than



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for going to bed sober, and the Republican Party has an infinite number of bad reasons for doing business as usual.

In response to the not-so-far leftists who run the GOP, self-described conservatives call for a restoration of conservative principles. This is one of the besetting follies of American conservatives, the delusion that "ideas have consequences," a pretentious phrase foisted on Richard Weaver by his publisher and inevitably picked up by the same Trotskyists who think that arguments between the kids at two City College cafeterias constituted a world-historical event. In Washington, think tankers who may behave as complete cynics still profess to believe in conservative principles, and even a Republican Party waterboy like Rush Limbaugh, improbable as it may seem, thinks he is engaged in a battle of ideas. If they are to accomplish anything, conservatives have to face the unpleasant truth that ideas mean very little to politicians in the postmodern political arena and even less to voters, who think of government the way children think of Santa Claus.

In a trivial way, we all know this: Money and media access win elections, while lofty principles, if a politician is unwise enough to articulate them, are so many weapons in the hands of the enemy. Defenders of "family values" are homophobes; believers in a moral order are fascists; critics of imperialism are traitors and cowards; and supporters of states' rights and the Old Republic are racists and bigots.

Conservatives concede the point and advise cowardice or, what is the same thing in such cases, caution, perhaps because they know intuitively that the real struggle is not over principles but over the interests of constituencies. In a simple way, we know that the oilmen who back the Republican Party have certain interests, as do Jewish and Christian Zionists who want to exterminate the enemies of Israel, agribusinessmen who want price supports and a guest-worker program for Mexicans, to say nothing of the ethnic, religious, sexual, and erotic minorities who all demand special privileges for their identity, sect, or perversity.

Even conflicts over principle are played out by parties that act as interest groups. Abortion, as a legal and political issue, is not the center of a moral contest over principle so much as it is a conflict among voting blocks and funding sources: Committed Christians and religious Jews oppose a woman's right to kill her babies, while organized feminism, Hollywood, and secularized Jews are in favor. If the former group has numerical superiority, the latter is richer in the stuff that dreams are made of, which is why abortion is unlikely to be recriminalized in the lifetime of anyone alive today.

There is no one who takes the most passing interest in politics who does not understand this fact. The men who have got rich and famous as political advisors have not been studying moral philosophy: They have been counting votes and laundering money.

A cynic would be tempted to say: "Thus it has ever been." Perhaps, but, while there is always a grain of truth in blanket condemnations of the human character, such condemnations tend to obscure the details in which the Devil is said to lurk. Modern states have elevated the political to a plane that supersedes all other loyalties. In premodern societies, economic interests naturally play a part in political disputes, faction fights, and civil wars, but family connections, religious differences, and territorial divisions may often be more important. Ancient Athens or Rome would provide good examples, but one might as easily take the Venetian republic, 17th-century England and France, or the United States of 200 years ago. In America, the states used to play a major role in politics, giving identity to the citizens and sending politicians to Congress who represented the states' interests. To a limited extent, this goes on today. As states lost sovereign power and mass politicking became the norm, however, other identities—socioeconomic class, union membership, minority status, ideology—began to take precedence.

So-called democracies, while they may continue the pattern of clan wars or religious struggles, tend to diminish the authority of Church and clan and focus ever more narrowly on the interests of individuals or abstract groups, such as classes and minorities. Since everyone thinks he has a stake in getting something from the treasury, his political identity (if he has one) tends to be defined by the noisy groups he is identified with. Machiavelli pointed out (in his *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*) that ordinary people have no interest in the state beyond personal security and a decent system of justice. In consequence, they spend very little time on political activities, because the rewards are comparatively slim in proportion to the time they would have to spend. However, interested minorities, such as aristocrats, know that a modest amount of effort can be rewarded with contracts, monopolies, lucrative positions, and the irresponsible power they are itching to abuse.

***There is no point in talking about a politician's principles. The pressing political need is to construct a coalition of interest groups that will want to feed at our kind of trough.***

The political economist Mancur Olson reached a parallel conclusion about citizens in a modern democracy. They pay scant attention to the state, whose policies and politics are controlled by small cliques with large appetites, and they are content if the laws are enforced, taxes kept moderate, and benefit checks sent out on time. Ultimately, the increase of the number and influence of interest groups leads to national impotence. What kind of practical strategy on the environment, for example, can be adopted, when the debate is entirely controlled by radical environmentalists and industrial polluters?

In the realm of "ideas," the politics of special interests are supported by an ideology of acquisitive individualism. Each individual, according to this theory, has the "right" to get as much of what he wants out of life as he can by any legal or nonaggressive means. Although this view is traditionally associated with classical liberals, and, thus, with Americans who have misappropriated the term *conservative*, it has also been adopted by the soft-Marxist European left that wants to give every male, female, and *she*male the right to be as swinish as any old-school capitalist pig.

The inescapable conclusion to be drawn from my rather elementary analysis is this: In democratic politics, principles and ideas play a very limited role as slogans in a propaganda war.



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The real contest is the struggle among vigorous and pushing swine for access to the trough. Recognizing this fact, conservatives might give up their language of social and economic revolution and drop the "morning again in America" rhetoric that has made them the slaves of the Republican Party apparatus. With less rhetoric and more practical effort, they might do a better job of crafting a coalition to support, for example, a gradualist approach to unraveling the evil system in which we are enmeshed: 75 years of socialist experimentation that saps our independence; government schooling that keeps the mind empty of learning and filled with hatred of all things decent and true; and a revolutionary judicial system, whose dictatorial powers are unparalleled in the Western world. In or out of the Republican Party, conservatives have to make the best deals they can make and then punish the politicos who default (as up till now they have always done) on their promises.

A conservative coalition would naturally expect to attract conservative voters, who are, so far as I can tell, predominantly straight white males and their faithful wives. They do not kill their babies, they go to church more than twice a year, and they pay more taxes than they consume. If they can afford it, they put their children in private or religious schools or, at least, live in rich neighborhoods where private education is not so urgent a necessity. Conservatives tend to be found in the suburbs, small towns, and rural areas rather than big cities. None of them works in Washington, D.C., for more than a year or two.

Their "principles" are usually an ill-assorted jumble derived from the Ten Commandments, the Boy Scout Oath, and "a set of the more practical Alger books." Innocent of all historical knowledge, they persist in believing, in the teeth of all the evidence presented to them by teachers and pundits, that the United States is the greatest country in the history of the world. They also believe in honesty, integrity, and fair play, and they think that men should be faithful to their wives (or at least pretend to be). They regard religion as basically a good thing, though only a minority are convinced that Messrs. Falwell, Robertson, and Dobson should be running the country on what they pretend to be Christian principles.

Unfortunately, conservatives are frequently divided on the great issues of the day. That is because issues are principles where money is involved. It is hard to persuade a combat veteran or a Boeing employee that the government of the United States is not entitled to invade any country she likes, much less to convince a schoolteacher's husband not to vote for the next school-district bond issue. Despite such divisions, eagerly promoted by Democrats and Republicans alike, conservatives are more likely to favor the Second Amendment and oppose *Roe* v. *Wade*—at the extreme they would rather shoot an abortionist than kill a baby. Because they own property and pay taxes, they dislike high taxes and eminent domain, but, after paying in to Social Security and Medicare for years, they are unlikely to challenge the basic assumptions of Great Society socialism.

No broadly popular coalition is going to be built on absolutist principles such as the "right to life" or opposition to foreign wars. As Sam Francis explained to me, when we first discussed putting out a conservative magazine (over 25 years ago), successful conservative movements are based either on greed or hate, preferably both. As for greed, we have more than enough issues: lower taxes, trim the budgets, and cut welfare. Hate (or resentment or righteous indignation) is even easier: Cut welfare, limit immigration, crack down on Muslims. The voters for such a coalition exist. The only problem is to find the well-heeled interest groups that will go along. There is only one way, and that is, first, to deliver the votes, and, second, to allow the big-money mobsters (in and out of office) to wet their beaks, so long as they deliver on the basic agenda.

Obviously, political advisors have been thinking along these lines for some time. Richard Nixon's "Southern strategy" and George W. Bush's outreach to conservative evangelicals are successful examples of an *ad hoc* application of the elementary principle. But from the conservative point of view, both Nixon and Bush were complete failures, not because Nixon had to leave office under threat of impeachment and Bush has bankrupted the country and destroyed her prestige. No, Nixon and Bush actually succeeded in doing much of what they wanted to do, but, since neither had a conservative bone in his body, both looked at their conservative supporters as so much cannon fodder in a battle in which only the generals know what the fighting was all about. Nixon was intelligent enough to know what he was doing, and he told people (me among them) that he made conscious use of conservatives who had always disliked him. Karl Rove knows, too, though it may not matter too much whether he has told his boss.

Conservatives themselves were playing this game before Mr. Nixon ran for the presidency. Their tactic, during the 1950's, was to use traditionalist conservatives as window dressing for a program of individualist liberalism. Poor Ayn Rand, who really and truly represented the deepest "philosophy" of *National Review*, had to be expelled for her rabid insistence on speaking the truth as she saw it. To this day, Christians and Southerners have not wised up. Every four years, they get out the vote for a party that betrays and insults them as soon as its members are in office.

There is no point in talking about a politician's principles. The pressing political need is to construct a coalition of interest groups that will want to feed at our kind of trough. There are few political idealists in Congress, and those who claim to be—a John McCain or a Rick Santorum—are less reliable than the party hacks who would never ask us to trust them. Far better to support a died-in-the-Italian-wool Machiavel such as Rudy Giuliani than virtually any candidate who has ever courted Ralph Reed or Pat Robertson. Yes, Giuliani says he favors abortion rights and Santorum says he opposes them, but politicians never mean what they say. Santorum did little in Congress to eliminate infanticide, and he backed the pro-abortion Arlen Specter for political reasons. Santorum lost his reelection bid because he deserved to lose.

If there were something in it for Rudy, a President Giuliani would outlaw abortion and restore the Constitution, and if there were enough in it for Santorum or Keyes, he would find a Christian argument for homosexual "marriage"—excuse me, for "civil unions," as Republicans like to say when they are pandering to the Christian Right, though there is no difference between a state-licensed marriage and a civil union. The evangelicals have shown that they know how to get out the vote, but they have never accomplished a significant objective, because the politicians who deceive them count on their loyalty to the party, which, for all too many, takes precedence over their professed religion. The same is true of conservatives, who will justify deficit spending, big government, and reckless globalism so long as these policies are in the hands of self-described conservatives. Until they learn to play hardball, the way George Wallace played hardball, conservatives may as well forget about the principles they pretend to espouse and sell their souls to the GOP.



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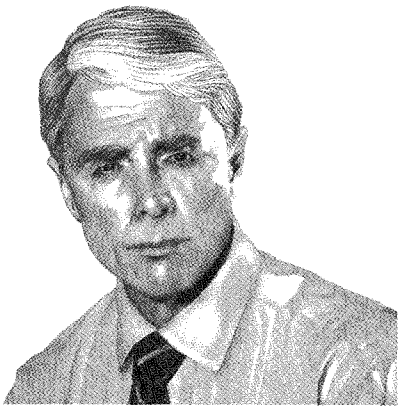
*by Roger D. McGrath*

# Clint Eastwood and Moral Equivalency



Since at least the late 60's, there has been an effort in academe and in Hollywood to make all cultures morally equivalent. More recently, there has been an effort to make "indigenous cultures"—whatever that means—morally superior to Western civilization. I was thinking of all this when I read an interview with Clint Eastwood that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*. Eastwood was promoting his new movie, *Letters From Iwo Jima*, which, he claims, will portray the battle for the island from the Japanese perspective. Drawing a moral equivalency between the Americans and the Japanese, Eastwood emphasizes that Americans committed atrocities. "Well, that happened a lot," proclaims Eastwood. "I talked to so many Marines who were there, and I'd say: 'What did you do with the prisoners?' And they'd look at me and go: 'We didn't have any prisoners.' And I'd say: 'Oh. OK.'"

Hold on here, ol' Clint. Aren't you leaving something out? Japanese atrocities were standard operating procedure, following a policy that was promoted and endorsed by the government of Japan and ran through the ranks from generals to privates. On Guadalcanal, the beginning of the American island campaign in the Pacific, the Marines learned this the hard way. When unarmed U.S. Navy corpsmen, who are the Marines' equivalent of Army medics, ran to treat fallen Japanese soldiers screaming for aid, the wounded Japanese would detonate grenades. Japanese snipers used the red cross on the corpsmen's medical bags as targets. It was not long before there were no more red crosses on medical bags and no more unarmed corpsmen rushing to the aid of fallen Japanese. Similarly, the Japanese staged fake surrenders that initially lured Marines to their deaths. The Marines stopped attempting to take prisoners for good reason. The Japanese were fighting to die. The Americans were fighting to live.

Eastwood says *Letters From Iwo Jima* will depict Japanese soldiers extending kindness and aid to a captured American, another perversion of reality. Why not show what happened to a real Marine who was captured in the real battle for Iwo Jima? Ralph Ignatowski, a close buddy of flag-raiser Jack Bradley and, like Bradley, a Wisconsin boy, was 17 when he joined the Marines and 18 when he landed on Iwo. "Iggy" was captured by the Japanese during the fighting, dragged into a cave, and tortured for three days. His teeth were hammered out, tongue cut out, ears cut off, eyes gouged out, limbs broken and nearly severed, and his penis sliced off and stuffed into his mouth. Perhaps, the Japanese had to evacuate the cave in a hurry—his head had not been decapitated, as was typical. This was all graphically described in the book *Flags of Our Fathers* but is almost entirely absent in Eastwood's movie of the same name. I don't expect to find it in *Letters From Iwo Jima*, either.

To include in his movies what the Japanese actually did to captured Americans would cause Eastwood problems with his moral-equivalency paradigm and destroy his box-office receipts in Japan. The latter is of no small concern. After three months in release, *Flags of Our Fathers*, which cost more than $90 million to make, had grossed only some $34 million domestically. American audiences apparently smelled a rat. Meanwhile, the movie had taken in $21 million overseas, mostly in Japan. Eastwood is counting on Japan to make *Letters From Iwo Jima* a hit. He appears in publicity photos wearing the uniform cap of the Japanese army.

Suspecting that some will question his portrayal of the Japanese, Eastwood claims to have no illusions about the nature of the enemy in the Pacific and to have read Iris Chang's *The Rape of Nanking*. Nonetheless, he euphemistically says, "I'm not trying to make them all out as powder puffs. The Japanese were tough, a tough enemy to have." Tough, is it? At Nanking, the Japanese killed upward of 300,000 civilians, including raping and then decapitating and dismembering as many as 50,000 Chinese girls. Japanese soldiers received supplemental sword and bayonet training by tying thousands of Chinese to posts and practicing thrusts and slashes. Chinese babies were tossed into the air and, as their trajectory brought them back toward earth, caught on the ends of Japanese bayonets. The Japanese bet on the sex of babies in the wombs of pregnant Chinese and then split open the women's bellies and pulled out the fetuses to see who won. Two Japanese sergeants engaged in a contest to see who could decapitate the most Chinese. Tokyo newspapers posted the numbers daily. There are photographs of all this with Japanese officers and enlisted personnel smiling and cheering. China claims the Japanese killed 30 million Chinese in World War II, mostly civilians.

The Bataan Death March demonstrated that decapitation was not reserved for Chinese. Riding in open cars by the long line of marching American prisoners, Japanese officers swung their swords at will and decapitated or dismembered those unlucky enough to be within range. A survivor of the Death March, Lt. Col. William Dyess, an Army Air Corps pilot, described the decapitation of a fellow American pilot:

> Before we could grasp what was happening [the Japanese officer] had swung his sword. I remember how the sun flashed on it. There was a swish and a kind of chopping thud, like a cleaver going through beef. The captain's head seemed to jump off his shoulders. It hit the ground in front of him and went rolling crazily from side to side between lines of prisoners. The body fell forward. I have seen wounds, but never such a gush of blood as this. The heart continued to pump for a few seconds and at each beat there was another great spurt of blood. The white dust around our feet was turned into crimson mud. I saw the hands were opening and closing spasmodically. Then I looked away.

Evidently, Clint Eastwood has looked away also. ©



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# It's the War, Stupid!

## Election 2006 and Beyond

### by Leon Hadar

Political analysts, consultants, and "scientists," envious of the success of economists in turning the study of wealth creation into a scientific discipline and a lucrative profession, are always searching for rules and laws to explain and discover certain regular and logical structures in human efforts involved in winning, preserving, and expanding power. Elections provide a wonderful opportunity for the members of this "profession" or "industry" to win fame, fortune, and, yes, power. Consultants dispense advice to candidates; pollsters "measure" public opinion; academics think-tank about the recent debate between the candidates; journalists cover the horse race; and pundits produce sound bites for 24/7 cable-television news.

In addition to the hundreds of seminars, studies, articles, and books that result from each election campaign, there is the occasional theoretical model to be "discovered" by the clever political scientist or witty pundit. Couched in statistics and scientific mumbo-jumbo, the model then gives birth to the inevitable "rule" that tends to be recycled to death and transformed eventually into conventional wisdom or even a political axiom. For example: If it rains in southeast California on Election Day, you can expect that a majority of short white men between the ages of 27 and 38 who live in Upstate New York will vote for Republican candidates.

Those who "do politics" for a living tend to be concerned that they might be perceived by the general public as "elitists," out of touch with the legendary Common Man. Hence academics, journalists, and pundits prefer to attach a certain folksy flavor to their pretentious chatter and, if possible, to recover some witticism attributed to a famous statesman, an entertaining author, or an infamous party boss and treat it as a political "rule of the thumb." For example: "This election is about who's going to be the next president of the United States" (Dan Quayle). Or, "Win or lose, we go shopping after the election" (Imelda Marcos). And then there is "All politics is local."

So it was not surprising that, on the eve of the recent midterm election, Republican pundits taking part in the infamous shouting matches on MSNBC's *Hardball* were highlighting their political IQs as well as advancing their agenda, as they kept reminding Chris Matthews that his former boss, the late speaker of the house Tip O'Neill, once said that all politics is local. Insisting repeatedly that congressional elections tend to be decided on local issues and local personalities, the Republican party-liners predicted that the results of the vote on November 7 were going to prove that old rule of thumb made up by the consummate politician from Massachusetts.

As we know by now, that was not the way it turned out. Instead, the American people made their decision based on what they felt about Washington, their country, and "the world"—which, in the Age of the American Empire, was coming to be known as "their world," which they were supposed to "engage" and try to tame and remake. And contrary to the Republican pundits' chatter on *Hardball*, nationalizing and globalizing the election campaign was very much part of the strategy of the political professionals in the White House and the Republican Party.

As Richard Viguerie—a leading political "professional," longtime conservative, and the godfather of political direct mail—pointed out in an interview published on *rawstory.com* a few days before the election, "All politics is local" was a Democratic saying. Viguerie explained: "Democrats like elections to be local. Democrats are a deliverer of services. They pave the roads, they make sure that your social security checks arrive on time. Not so Republicans." Republicans never win national elections unless the country is focused on a national agenda, argued Viguerie. Ronald Reagan's victory at the polls in 1980 happened because "those elections were nationalized, people were focused on a national election." In "1994, the country was focused on . . . Hillary care, the competence of Bill Clinton, a social agenda, gay rights, a tax increase where no Republican voted for it and that was a nationalized election." And the Republicans also nationalized the 2002 election quite successfully. "Originally they were opposed to homeland security legislation, and then they flipped and came out for it," Viguerie said. His advice to the Republicans was to continue advancing their original game plan—that is, to nationalize the elections in 2006 by focusing on national security and America's place in the world.

Thanks to these efforts by Republicans, 2006 may be recalled as America's third globalized election. After all, if the neoconservative ideologues have succeeded in persuading President George W. Bush and his aides that striving for U.S. global hegemony—and, in particular, for dominance in the broader Middle East—is a core U.S. national interest, the strategy of Bush's top political aide, Karl "Boy Genius" Rove, was to exploit the neoconservative policies as a way of winning electoral victories, by creating in the minds of the American voters a nexus between Iraq (and Iran, Syria, and any other regime on the neocon "hit list") and national defense. Hence, since September 11, 2001, Bush has campaigned in one presidential contest (2004) and two congressional races (2002 and 2004) as a victorious "war President." Bush and his Republican allies in Congress chalked up one electoral victory after another by comparing the occupant of the White House to Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Bush was cast as a president supposedly leading America—and the Free World—in a global struggle against the terrorist network led by Osama bin Laden and (allegedly) Saddam Hussein. Thrown in for good measure were the Axis of Evil countries (Iraq, Iran,

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North Korea) attempting to acquire weapons of mass destruction to attack America and the West.

The rising nationalism that swept America after September 11 helped Mr. Bush and the Republican Party rally voters round the President, the flag, and Judeo-Christian civilization. Bush was proclaimed to be standing up against Islamofascism; wimpy Europeans; and the weak, spineless, and godless Democrats. The initial military victories in Afghanistan and Iraq helped to mobilize electoral support for Bush and the Republicans, especially in the Red States in the Midwest and the South, and even helped the party to advance into Democratic territories in the Blue States on the East and West Coasts.

When you nationalize and even try to globalize elections by making the case that the security of the American people is linked directly to the ability of the U.S. military to take over, occupy, and remake Iraq, the Middle East, and the world, a failure to achieve these ambitious goals ends up affecting your standing with voters. Indeed, Bush has been unable to meet expectations that have been raised to the stratosphere—about finding WMDs in Iraq, uncovering ties between Osama and Saddam, establishing a stable democracy in Iraq, spreading freedom and democracy in the Middle East. And if you try to stoke up militant nationalism as a way of winning an election, you should not be surprised when a perception of defeat on the battlefield in Iraq is translated into an electoral defeat at home.

To put it differently, when one sets himself up as the Global Emperor, as the Master of the Universe, he is then required to demonstrate that he can control those many distant provinces that his troops occupy. If not, his subjects—well, at least those who have the right to vote—tend to express their anger at him during elections. In this case, O'Neill's maxim remains valid in the sense that what is happening now in Gaza City and Tel Aviv, Kabul and Karachi, Beirut and Damascus, Fallujah and Baghdad has ceased to be "foreign." These and many other exotic locales have all become as "local" as Damascus (Maryland), Alexandria (Virginia), Palestine (West Virginia), and Babylon (Ohio), as far as the American voter is concerned.

Indeed, the many exit and postelection polls have indicated that the main concern for the American voter was Iraq—or, more specifically, the mess the U.S. government had made there. Only 10 percent of voters thought that the Iraq war was not an important factor in the election, while 35 percent considered it extremely important. Polls also showed that people disapproved of the Iraq war, but the key change was that at least 55 percent of those who voted believed that Americans should start withdrawing some or all of our troops from Iraq.

That was the message the American voters were sending on Election Day. Democrats, independents, and many, many Republicans wanted to know how and when the United States is going to get out of the mess in Mesopotamia. "In contact mainly with fawning campaign contributors, Bush may not appreciate the steady decline in support of his war policy that I have seen deepening among Republicans in the past year," wrote Robert Novak in early December. "At the Republican grass roots, there is no question that Iraq lost the election. State officials and party leaders who are no specialists on foreign policy tell me that the Republican Party simply cannot go into the 2008 campaign with troops still fighting in Iraq."

From that perspective, the unqualified mandate that the Democrats should be taking from the election is that they need to press for an end of the war. There is no other way to explain the victory of Democrat (and former Republican) James Webb against the popular Republican senator George Allen in Virginia than to conclude that Webb, the former Marine and secretary of the Navy under President Reagan whose son is serving in Iraq, had won by accentuating a consistent and very aggressive antiwar agenda against the pro-war Allen. Any attempt by the Democratic leadership to water down the effect of Webb's antiwar message—or, for that matter, that of Rep. John Murtha of Pennsylvania—will ensure their defeat in 2008.

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At the same time, in order to regain control of Capitol Hill and maintain their hold over the White House, the Republicans need to adjust to the new political realities produced by the midterm election, as did Presidents Clinton and Reagan following the electoral defeats their respective parties suffered in midterm congressional races. I doubt that Bush would be willing to follow suit by using the recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton Commission as political cover to start withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq, negotiating with Iran, and launching a new initiative to revive the stalled Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. This is, after all, the same President who told Bob Woodward (as quoted in Woodward's *State of Denial*) that he would not withdraw from Iraq even if it got to the point where Laura and Barney (his wife and his dog) were the only ones left supporting him. Since neither Bush nor Vice President Dick Cheney is running for office in 2008, they will actually be more inclined to go "full-speed ahead" with their Iraq policy. The war in Iraq "may not be popular with the public. It doesn't matter in the sense that we have to continue the mission and do what we think is right," Cheney told ABC News. "[A]nd that's exactly what we're doing. We're not running for office. We're doing what we think is right."

For the Republicans who will be running for office in 2008, and for right-wing members of the political and intellectual classes who want to maintain their credibility outside of the *Washington Times*/FOXNews/AEI nexus, "doing right" would mean distancing themselves from Bush-Cheney and their remaining neocon groupies. That could lead to a civil war, if not a political bloodbath in the Republican and conservative ranks, as Hamiltonian "realists" and Jacksonian nationalists join forces to lessen the influence of the Wilsonian crusaders on the foreign-policy debate to pursue an agenda that reflects core U.S. national interests. The selection of Robert Gates, a veteran of the administrations of Reagan and George H.W. Bush, to replace Donald Rumsfeld in the Pentagon may be a sign of things to come. Members of the Hamiltonian-Jacksonian coalition in the bureaucracy and on Capitol Hill, where Senators Chuck Hagel of Nebraska and John Warner of Virginia would probably play a leading role on foreign policy, may



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Melanie Anderson

begin taking steps to disengage the United States from Iraq following recommendations from the bipartisan Iraq Study Group. Even more critical will be an effort to prevent the Last Neocons Standing from fulfilling their dream of a U.S. war with Iran.

We can expect a similar foreign-policy debate to take place among the Democrats and liberal think tankers and pundits, pitting the pro-war Lieberman Democrats on Capitol Hill and their intellectual allies at the *New Republic* and the Brookings Institution against antiwar liberals such as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and populists such as James Webb, with those in the middle, including presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton—who voted in favor of the resolution allowing Bush to attack Iraq—being forced to choose sides. The Constitution does not grant Congress much power in governing foreign affairs, but the Democrats could still have a major impact on the direction our foreign policy takes. In particular, they could form legislative alliances with like-minded lawmakers on the Republican side—say, the two senators from Virginia, Democrat Webb and Republican Warner, working with Gates in the Pentagon to fashion a realistic exit strategy for Iraq. Would Democrat Lieberman and Republican John McCain try to collaborate in setting legislative and political obstacles in the way of those attempting to demolish the failed neoconservative strategy?

It is quite possible that these scenarios are nothing more than wishful thinking. More likely, the war in Iraq will continue to escalate, the United States will come closer to a military confrontation with Iran, and Washington will not make serious efforts to end the bloodbath in the Holy Land. As the number of American casualties in Iraq rise, and as defense spending skyrockets and U.S. budget and trade deficits reach historic highs, increasing the dependency of our economy on financial assistance from Asian central banks and driving the U.S. dollar to new lows, the last-ditch effort of Democratic and Republican leaders to cut the costs of maintaining the American Empire will probably fail.

The 2008 election could take place against the backdrop of the costly and painful overextension of American power in the Middle East and around the globe, as the distinction between "local" and "foreign" becomes meaningless. Under these conditions, the message from the American voter could acquire a more angry nationalist and populist tone with regard to foreign policy, trade, and immigration. And the winner in that election would be the party that promises to make politics local again. ◁©▷


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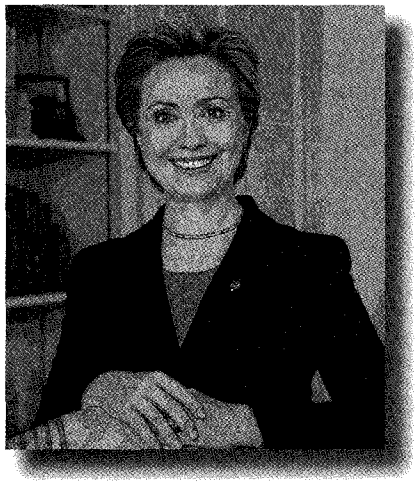

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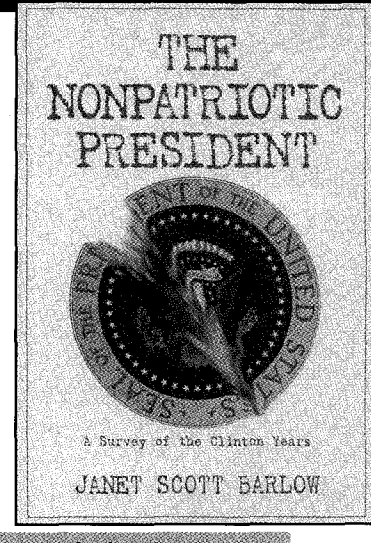
by Janet Scott Barlow

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# Committing Political Suicide

## The 109th Congress

### by Doug Bandow

Melanie Anderson

The 109th Congress was ugly to behold. Spendthrift, irresponsible, incompetent, corrupt—like the pigs who were transformed into the farmers they had displaced in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, the Republicans ended up looking like the Democratic legislative establishment they had toppled just a dozen years before.

This proved to be politically inconvenient. After all, it was no longer possible to frighten voters by repeating the usual mantra of prospective Democratic misdeeds when the Republican majority already was perpetrating most of them. One disaffected GOP wag observed: "Yes, the Democrats would certainly be worse. They would probably hire Islamofascist terrorists to kill their mistresses. After forcing them to have abortions and gay marriages." The fact that Americans proved impervious to Republican scaremongering was only slightly more surprising than the fact that Republicans did not deploy the specter of mistress-murdering Islamofascist terrorists.

Some Republican Party apparatchiks have attempted to downplay the significance of their losses on November 7. Yet it was through maldistricting that the Republicans limited their House losses, and the newly Democratic state legislatures will reverse that after the 2010 census. In the Senate, Democrats took 24 of 33 contests, losing not one seat. And the losses rolled down to the state level, giving Democrats a majority of governorships for the first time since 1994, as well as the dominant state legislative position.

The election ended fantasies about an enduring Republican majority. With President George W. Bush's approval rating around 30 percent, what a good many Republican Party professionals most desire from him is his departure. And the Democrats will cheerfully make him wish he were back in Texas. As Martin Sieff of United Press International observes, "Bush, the least bipartisan of presidents for his first six years in power when he was riding high, can cry all he wants now about wanting to work with Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid. They and their majorities are going to spend the next two years tearing him apart."

The GOP problem was both substance and process. Polls indicate that Iraq was the most important issue. Dissatisfaction with Mr. Bush's war sharply drove down Republican votes by independents and moderates and even dampened support among what had been his most reliable constituencies: conservatives, married men and women, evangelicals, and "values voters." Irresponsible, wasteful spending was another common criticism: Outlays have increased 47 percent since 2001, with 270 more subsidy programs in operation. In size, scope, and expense, the federal government today looks an awful lot like it did in 1994, only bigger. By Election Day, more Americans viewed the GOP as the home of big spenders and trusted Democrats more than Republicans to handle the budget deficit.

Of course, the Democrats' hands are not clean when it comes to the war or spending. But the Republicans overshadowed them by bringing to the table the gift that keeps on giving: scandal. Scandal is a natural part of political life. Not natural, as the GOP proved so dramatically, is confronting scandal honestly and competently.

Republican scandals fell into three categories: legislative operations, lobbying abuses, and sexual peccadillos. The first was the most serious, but, because it happened in broad daylight, it did not have the feel of a typical scandal.

No one, no matter how partisan, can easily railroad the Senate, whose rules make it a more deliberative body. Without at least 60 votes to defeat a filibuster, even a determined majority can only go so far so fast. The House, however, is more of an

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elective dictatorship. For years, the GOP minority chafed under a Democratic majority that provided Republicans with few committee resources and equally few opportunities to influence legislation. When Newt Gingrich led his Republican warriors to victory, the new leadership promised an era of openness. Rules would be fair; operations would be efficient.

It did not take very long for Republicans to succumb to the honeyed elixir of power, however. Winning votes and, even more importantly, retaining the majority (which meant preserving incumbents) soon displaced promises of reform. The eventual partnership of Dennis Hastert and Tom DeLay created an unstoppable GOP freight train.

The Republican leadership operated on the simple principle that nothing got to the House floor that was not backed by a majority of the majority. That meant that raw partisanship, rather than any form of bipartisanship, ruled. Of course, little good usually comes from bipartisanship. When legislators of both parties stand together, citizens should reach for their wallets; when the President joins the parade, people should start running. Nonetheless, partisanship disconnected from principle (other than a determination to get reelected) is even worse.

The Republican House Rules Committee operated as it always had, restricting not only what legislation got to the floor but what amendments the Democrats could offer to the legislation that made it. Moreover, rules were bent as far as necessary to achieve the desired partisan result. The most scandalous moment occurred early on a morning in 2003, when the House leadership held open for three hours the Medicare Prescription Drug Bill ballot in order to cajole a couple of Republicans to switch their votes—something the Democrats had never done in the 40 years they controlled the House. When this was not enough, Hastert and DeLay strong-armed enough congressmen to win the necessary reversals. The leadership even promised a retiring member that they would support his son as his replacement. In the end, the House GOP delivered legislation that created more than $18 trillion in unfunded future liabilities—more than Social Security's total future deficit.

The GOP President and Congress also routinely abused the appropriation process, adding extra outlays after enacting the budget. As Veronique de Rugy of the American Enterprise Institute notes, "Supplemental spending, 'emergency' spending in particular, has become Washington's tool of choice for evading annual budget limits and increasing spending across the board." The use of supplementals rose from $7 billion in 1998 to $143 billion in 2005.

Less expensive but more obnoxious was the earmarking of money to be spent on individual projects or directed to particular grantees. In this, the Democrats were pikers compared to the Republican majority. The GOP Congress passed 14,000 earmarks in 2005, adding 6,371 to the Transportation Bill alone. As Rep. Jeff Flake (R-AZ) observed, Republicans have "adopted the belief or the principle that you spend money to get elected."

After the "bridge to nowhere" became a *cause célèbre*, Congress delisted the project with great fanfare, only to provide the same amount of money to the same Alaskan authorities to do with as they (meaning Alaska Sen. Ted Stevens, father of the "bridge to nowhere") wished. The House later passed rules to identify those requesting earmarks, but only after a great struggle—in which Republican Appropriations Committee members threatened to kill the bill. In December, the GOP caucus reelected Rep. Roy Blunt, a vocal defender of the practice, as whip. Only a lame-duck filibuster by Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK) and Jim DeMint (R-SC) forced the Republican leadership to drop spending bills for 2007 containing roughly 10,000 earmarks.

Although the operations of the House never became a clear-cut campaign issue for most Americans (it was too much inside baseball), the process angered principled conservatives. Equally important, Republican misbehavior served as a backdrop for the other, more obvious scandals.

Another strategy to create a permanent Republican majority involved conscripting Washington lobbyists. The "K Street Project" actually was a complicated creature, involving various activists and politicians. Much of what went on was not particularly controversial: Where ideological conservatives and practical lobbyists wanted the same result, cooperation was easy. Nor could Republicans be blamed for knocking on the doors of firms that once hired Democrats.

Majority Leader Tom "The Hammer" DeLay went a step further, seeking to bust down those doors by taking "cooperation" with K Street to a new level. He created an atmosphere of "pay to play" and aggressively raised funds from lobbyists. With little subtlety, the GOP leadership threatened businesses and associations that employed Democrats. In return, lobbyists played a key role in drafting legislation. Although Democrats had never been hesitant to work with K Street and squeeze its denizens for campaign contributions (remember Tony Coelho?), Republicans refined the process.

Rather than being chastised by criticism of his hardball tactics and tainted associations, DeLay gloried in them. He applied his hammer to the Texas state legislature, pushing the new Republican majority to redistrict the state in order to increase sharply the number of Republican congressmen. Fairly or not, his various activities eventually led to a state investigation.

Unfortunately for him, the rules implemented by GOP reformists when they organized Congress in January 1995 required that any leader step down if indicted. As a DeLay indictment became likely, the leadership decided that the rule had been a silly idea and pushed a reluctant caucus to drop that provision. Abandoning their own rule the first time it applied triggered outrage far beyond Washington, causing Republican leaders to reverse themselves, and, in 2005, DeLay was indicted and resigned.

The DeLay mess was modest compared with the imbroglios surrounding Rep. Duke Cunningham (R-CA) and Jack Abramoff. In 2005, it became apparent that Cunningham, previously a well-respected conservative, had essentially sold his services to a defense contractor for $2.4 million in cash and goods. His resignation and conviction quickly followed. Rep. Curt Weldon (R-PA) later was hit with less serious, but still career-ending, allegations of steering federal contracts to his lobbyist daughter.

A well-connected politico who got his start in the College Republicans, Abramoff built a complex network of clients, activists, and legislators. Indian tribes, in particular, paid astounding fees to a lobbyist who privately insulted them; Abramoff directed monies to friendly organizations and treated helpful congressmen and staffers to tickets and trips. Eventually, the enterprise crashed spectacularly.

By historic standards, it was a modest scandal. There were



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no bribes paid to Cunningham, no satchels full of cash passed hither and yon. Rep. John Murtha (D-PA), who unsuccessfully ran for majority leader, came much closer to the edge years ago in Abscam than did any of those linked to Abramoff. (Rep. Robert Ney (R-OH) was convicted for gorging on perks otherwise normal on Capitol Hill, not money.) The issue's primary impact was symbolic. The spectacle of DeLay's aides becoming lobbyists to cash in, Representative Ney traversing the globe enjoying expensive perks, and Sen. Conrad Burns (R-MT) collecting campaign donations contributed to the image of ideologues gone native. Few GOP members lost because of their direct association with Abramoff. But the whole Abramoff affair, including the GOP's anemic response, stoked a fire already raging because of Iraq, overspending, and other scandals.

No campaign would be complete without a sex scandal. After all, when the public square includes Bill Clinton, Ted Kennedy, Newt Gingrich, and Robert Livingston, it seems strange not to have an ongoing sex scandal. However, such controversies are most damaging when they stain the party that is consciously appealing to "values voters." It gets worse when the response to the scandal reinforces the perception that Republicans took just 12 years to become as arrogant and out of touch as the Democrats became after 40 years.

The GOP's first sexual pinup was Rep. Don Sherwood (R-PA), who was accused of assaulting his mistress. He acknowledged the infidelity but denied that he had ever abused her, though he did pay $500,000 to settle her lawsuit. Despite Sherwood's sleaziness, the GOP imperative was to preserve the majority in a tough year, so every seat mattered. This led President George W. Bush, faithful Christian and vocal proponent of moral values, to visit Sherwood's district. Notably, Sherwood was one of the few GOP candidates who requested a presidential visit.

Also scheduled to appear on Sherwood's behalf were Speaker Hastert and Rep. Tom Reynolds (R-NY), chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee. Because of the antics of Rep. Mark Foley (R-FL), however, Hastert and Reynolds became more toxic than Don Sherwood, and they were forced to cancel their visit.

Never a heavyweight member of the GOP leadership, Foley nevertheless chaired a committee, considered running for the Senate, and was pushed by worried House leaders to run for reelection after he had decided to retire. At the same time, he was suspected of being one of Capitol Hill's closeted homosexual members. It turns out that he was also busily ingratiating himself with male House interns, engaging in salacious e-mail and internet-messaging exchanges with a number of young men. He apparently had sexual contact with at least one of them, though only after the intern turned 21.

The scandal itself was revolting, but not as revolting as the reaction of the Republican leadership. The first priority of the speaker, majority leader, majority whip, NRCC head, and others in leadership positions was to avoid taking responsibility. Instead, they pointed fingers at one another and everyone else. Top Republican staffers suffered a sudden onset of amnesia, forgetting conversations about Foley's conduct. The GOP congressmen in charge of the intern program apparently were clueless for years even as new interns were being warned to beware the overly friendly Foley.

The second reaction was to blame the Democrats. Hastert and his partisan confederates, who had routinely disemboweled the Democratic opposition, claimed—shock!—that their opponents knew of the allegations and alerted the press. GOP officials also cried *et tu!* Many Democrats had sought to lessen the punishment meted out on Rep. Gerry Studds (D-MA), who had sex with an underage male page in the last House page scandal two decades before.

Obviously, the GOP did not get it. The Republicans controlled the House and ruled with a firm hand. Foley was a Republican. As the recently released House Ethics Committee report explains, a number of GOP members and staffers learned of inappropriate contacts between Foley and pages at least a decade ago but made no effort to investigate his conduct. The Republican leadership withheld all information from the Democratic member of the House Page Board while tossing the problem to the head of the GOP congressional campaign committee. When allegations of Foley's conduct surfaced, Republicans worried more about protecting themselves and their electoral prospects than about investigating the charges or worrying about Foley's impact on past interns. In a model of understatement, the Ethics Committee concluded that Republican leaders "failed to exercise appropriate diligence."

None of the scandals alone was lethal. The eyes of many voters glaze over when candidates start arguing about legislative rules, and, after 40 years of running the House as a partisan fiefdom, the Democrats could not convincingly whine about their mistreatment.

The Republicans may have forged some new ground in attempting to seize control of K Street, but they mostly perfected Democratic techniques in shaking down lobbyists for campaign aid. The Democrats also have Rep. William Jefferson (D-LA), who keeps bribes in his freezer. Democratic ethics and earmark "reforms" are not likely to come to much, and Democratic congressmen had been caught with their hands out or their pants down over the years without costing the Democrats their majority. Indeed, the GOP attack on Bill Clinton, who was caught indisputably lying about sexual misconduct in the Oval Office, appeared to have cost the party seats in 1998.

Collectively, however, the scandals were devastating. Principled conservatives knew that the GOP Congress and President had slipped their moorings. The list of grievances was long and serious, but not so obvious to voters and even grassroots conservatives who paid more attention to the campaign rhetoric of their supposed champions than to their actual performance. The scandals provided irrefutable proof to everyone, even those who usually paid scant attention to public affairs, that the Republicans were more interested in themselves than in anyone else.

The almost unlamented 109th Congress was ideologically vacuous, bereft of ideas, and committed only to winning reelection. It also was lazy, working fewer than three days per week and finishing only two of eleven spending bills, pushing the others onto the incoming Democratic Congress. On what basis did the GOP majority deserve reelection?

Admittedly, there is little reason to hope for much positive good to come from the new Democratic majority. However, "negative good" is possible, even likely. Power tends to corrupt, even when it is wielded by Republicans controlling both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. In January, the return of divided government reestablished the checks and balances so valued by the nation's Founding Fathers. ◁



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# Lost in Iraq

## The Election, Republicans, and Conservatives

### by The Hon. John J. Duncan, Jr.

In one of the most memorable lines in American political history, Joseph Welch, the patrician Boston lawyer, asked Sen. Joseph McCarthy, "Have you no sense of decency?" Traditional conservatives should be asking the so-called neoconservatives if they have no sense of shame.

In the pages of *Vanity Fair*, on various television interviews, and in other media, the neocons have been trying to shift blame for our disaster in Iraq. We should not let them escape responsibility, however—for Iraq or for the numerous Republican losses on Election Day. Not only did the GOP suffer big losses in both the House and Senate, but several members who eked out narrow victories will face much tougher challenges two years from now.

It is almost sickening to read and hear Richard Perle, Bill Kristol, Kenneth Adelman (of "cakewalk" fame), and other architects of the misadventure in Iraq say that the war would have been successful if more troops had been sent or if the Bush administration had not botched it. The worst thing, without question, is that nearly 3,000 young Americans have been killed, and many thousands more have been horribly wounded. Our soldiers do a great job wherever they are sent, and it is certainly no criticism of them to say this was an unnecessary war.

A secondary but still important ramification of all this is the loss of conservative seats in Congress and the elevation of Nancy Pelosi and others on the far left to positions of power. Considering the advantages Republicans enjoyed before the election because of favorable redistricting, a good economy, lower gas prices, a booming stock market, popular tax cuts, and liberal elitism that alienates so many, it is the weakest of excuses to say that their losses were just typical of a sixth-year presidency. Even Bill Clinton picked up seats for his party in his sixth year.

It was Iraq that fired up the Democrats and swung surprisingly big majorities of independents their way. About Iraq, Tim Russert said on NBC the next morning: "That was the issue that drove this election." And, while he acknowledged that there were other factors involved, in the end, it was "all about Iraq."

At 12:15 A.M. on Election Night, MSNBC's Chris Matthews correctly declared that "the decision to go to war in Iraq was not a conservative decision, historically. It was a reach of power. It was not along the old lines of limited power . . . The President has asked the Republicans to behave like a different people than they, it seems to me, intrinsically are."

Every year since we voted to go to war in 2002, I have said in speeches on the House floor that there is nothing conservative about the war in Iraq and that it goes against every traditional conservative position. I do realize, however, that a large majority of Republicans still support the war. They like President Bush personally and want to be loyal to him. And, as the editors of *Chronicles* know better than almost anyone else, it is virtually impossible to take on the bully pulpit of the White House and foreign-policy elitists, in and out of the administration, especially when they are supported by the big guns in the national conservative media.

Still, many conservatives are beginning to express doubts, especially when such people as William F. Buckley, Jr., and Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (the President's own senator) say they would have been against the war if they had known in 2002 what they know now.

Even back before the invasion, some were warning of the consequences of failure in Iraq. In the November 25, 2002, issue of *Fortune*, Bill Powell warned (in "Iraq—We Win. Then What?") that "A military victory could turn into a strategic defeat. . . . A prolonged, expensive, American-led occupation . . . could turn U.S. troops into sitting ducks for Islamic terrorists."

Eighty percent of House Republicans voted against the bombings in the former Yugoslavia under President Clinton. I am convinced that at least the same percentage would have opposed the war in Iraq if it had been started by a Democratic president. I remember as a teenager reading a pamphlet from the Republican National Committee saying that Democrats start wars and Republicans end them. Perpetual war for perpetual peace is not a traditional Republican or traditional conservative position.

What should we do now, with regard to Iraq and with regard to the future of the Republican Party?

First, we must admit that a civil war is and has been raging in the more populated areas of Iraq for many months. Deaths of 40 or 50 per day (sometimes even over 100) are not uncommon, and Iraq has a population that is only one twelfth of ours. If we were seeing equivalent internecine killings—several hundred thousand—in the United States, we would consider it a civil war.

We also need to acknowledge that, although we have great respect for our military leadership, they will always say that great progress is being made and much good is occurring. There is a reason why we have civilian leadership over the Department of Defense.

While some good things are taking place in Iraq—since so many billions have been spent there and most of what we have spent really is pure foreign aid—we must recognize that our Constitution and our debt do not permit us to run another country. What we are doing in Iraq is both unconstitutional and unaffordable.

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*The Hon. John J. Duncan, Jr., serves as representative of Tennessee's 2nd District to the U.S. Congress.*



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Perhaps a positive spin could be put on the fact that we have basically built or rebuilt the infrastructure of a country that had a total GDP of only $65 billion the year before we took over. But we should also point out that our own State Department polls show that a vast majority of Iraqis want us to leave and that it was never our intention to stay forever.

Everyone now says there are no good options, so I believe we should begin a phased redeployment and bring most of our troops home—the sooner, the better, as far as I am concerned. Besides slowing down and (one hopes) ending the killing and maiming of our troops, conservatives could finally stop trying to defend some of the most wasteful, lavish, and ridiculous government contracts in our nation's history.

As for the Republican Party, we need to start being Republicans again. This country needs a conservative party. In my lifetime, the Republican Party has been the conservative party—and it should continue to be. We did poorly in the elections because we strayed from our conservative beliefs and forced most Republicans to support a very unpopular and very unconservative war. There really is no such thing as a "big-government conservative." The neoconservatives who have been described that way are not conservative at all.

Conservatives used to believe in local control of schools, so we should not have been asked to support "No Child Left Behind." Much of that bill was written by Ted Kennedy, and it greatly increased federal control over education.

Conservatives used to oppose the expansion of entitlements and should not have been asked to support the Prescription Drug Benefit. Yet the Bush administration withheld information about the true cost of the measure and made it clear they would deal with the Democrats and make the bill much more expensive if reluctant Republicans did not go along.

Conservatives used to be against Big Brother and an overly powerful federal government and should not have been asked to support the USA PATRIOT Act. Now, several hundred local governments and even several state legislatures have lined up in opposition to this great expansion of federal power.

Conservatives used to oppose big increases in federal spending and earmarks. Over the last few years, Republicans in Congress have disappointed most conservatives by championing big increases in spending and in our deficits and debt.

And conservatives used to be against world government and interventionist foreign policies that create so much resentment toward the United States. We need to oppose empire and nation building, as President Bush did in his 2000 campaign, and return to the more humble foreign policy he advocated then. We need to tell people that world government is too elitist, arrogant, and expensive, and too far removed from control by the people. And we must oppose international rules and regulations that harm American businesses and workers.

We need noninterventionist foreign and defense policies that will keep our young people from being killed and maimed in unnecessary wars that primarily benefit other countries. And we especially need to return to conservative fiscal policies in both domestic and foreign affairs and stop turning the Department of Defense into a Department of Foreign Aid.

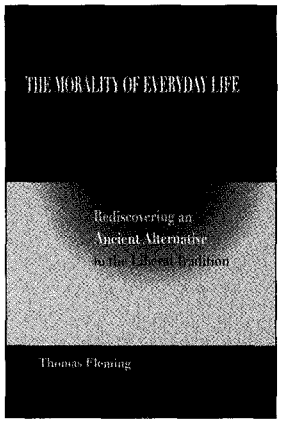
We need a presidential candidate who will run on a platform built of these planks, and, above all, we need a truly conservative president and Congress who will start putting our own people first. ©


*The Morality of Everyday Life: Rediscovering an Ancient Alternative to the Liberal Tradition*

**by Thomas Fleming**

What passes for conservatism today is really nothing more than the impossible moral and social theories of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in which universal abstractions, such as democracy and equality, are presented as hard truths, when, in fact, they have never existed in any society in human history. Nonetheless, they are to be applied worldwide, at the tip of a spear (or cruise missile) if necessary.

Dr. Fleming's alternative is rooted in "everyday life," the local realities of blood and soil, custom and tradition, friendship and faith, and in the wisdom born of the experiences these realities beget. This wisdom finds expression in folktales and fables, in ancient Hebrew Scriptures and Greek philosophy, and in medieval casuistry. It is the method to solving ethical problems great and small, and it is the method that undergirds authentic conservatism.

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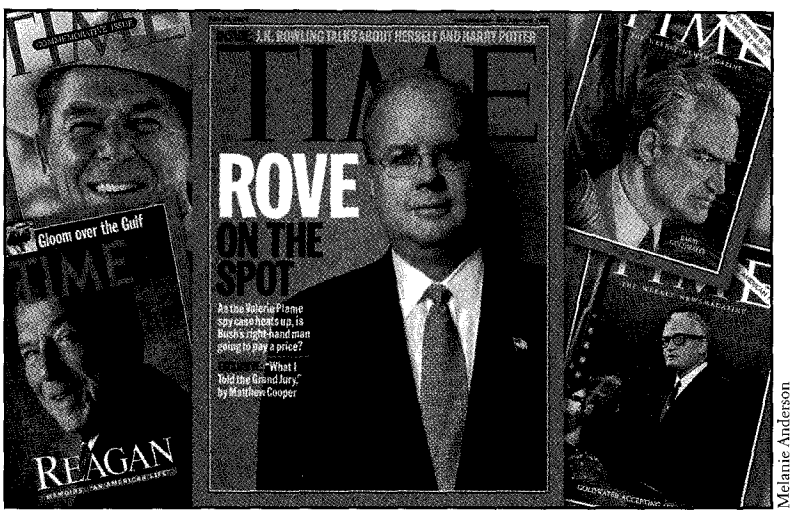
# The End of the Rove Era in Republican Politics

## Time to Remember the Forgotten

### by Tom Pauken


TIME
ROVE
ON THE
SPOT
As the Valerie Plame spy case heats up, is Bush's right-hand man going to pay a price?
"What I Told the Grand Jury," by Matthew Cooper
Gloom over the Gulf
REAGAN

Melanie Anderson

A few weeks after the Republicans were routed in the November 2006 elections, a longtime Bush Republican from Texas told me that it was time for Karl Rove to go. That comment spoke volumes, for it came from someone who had worked closely with Rove ever since his early days as a political consultant in the campaigns of Texas Gov. Bill Clements.

Given the November election losses suffered by Republicans across the country and the waning influence of a lame-duck President, all of a sudden the man hailed as the "political genius" of the Republican Party does not look quite so smart. That "permanent" Republican majority Rove said he was building crashed and burned in the November debacle.

Yet Rove, intent on salvaging his political legacy as "the grand Republican strategist of our times," has a hard time letting go. To that end, he has maintained his control over the Republican National Committee (RNC) by naming Sen. Mel Martinez of Florida as general chairman of the party and Kentucky's Mike Duncan, longtime member of the Republican National Committee, as head of the RNC's day-to-day operations. Both men are known Rove loyalists. They replace former Rove political deputy Ken Mehlman, who chaired the RNC the last two years.

Rove's selection of Martinez to be the public face of the GOP is an attempt to woo two groups who deserted the party in droves this past November: Catholics and Hispanics. However, even though Martinez and Duncan are Rove's choices to run the RNC, he will not enjoy the level of control over the Republican Party that he had when Mehlman was at the helm. While Rove will try to give orders to the new party leaders, there is no guarantee that Martinez or Duncan will salute when Karl Rove gives them marching orders.

The selection of Martinez, however, is typical of Rove's top-down approach to politics. You can almost hear his mind working: "Hey, the 2006 elections showed that we have a problem with the Catholics and the Hispanics. We'll appoint Martinez chairman of the RNC to win both groups back." That is the tactic Rove used when he was trying to win the support of the Christian Right for George W. Bush in 2000. Rove had former Christian Coalition head Ralph Reed placed on Enron's payroll as a "consultant" so that Reed could deliver the evangelical vote to George W. Bush in the Republican presidential primary. In that same campaign, Rove recruited Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform to get taxpayer groups behind Bush's candidacy. Later, he tapped neoconservative Catholic convert Deal Hudson of *Crisis* to win over the Catholic vote. Rove also enlisted Washington lobbyist Jack Abramoff to work the Orthodox Jewish constituency, as well as to help with many of the Washington Beltway types. Interestingly, Rove, Reed, Norquist, and Abramoff all got their start in politics as College Republican activists.

As an early warning signal that things were not going well for the Rove machine in the 2006 election cycle, one by one, Rove and his key allies found themselves under fire for various reasons. The first two to fall were Hudson and Abramoff. Deal Hudson had to resign his position as head of Rove's Catholic coalition after a liberal Catholic newspaper revealed that he had been fired as a Fordham professor for taking inappropriate liberties with a female student. Washington lobbyist Jack Abramoff (known as "Casino Jack" for his lobbying work on behalf of Indian gaming interests) pled guilty to bribery and influence-peddling charges. He currently resides in a federal penitentiary. Then Ralph Reed, who was paid millions of

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*Tom Pauken, the former chairman of the Texas Republican Party, is the chairman of the Texas Task Force on Appraisal Reform.*



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dollars in lobbying fees by Abramoff's firm, was defeated in his bid for the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor of Georgia. Meanwhile, Grover Norquist lost much of his credibility with conservative groups when his close ties to Jack Abramoff became public knowledge. Nor were conservatives enthusiastic about Norquist's lobbying activities on behalf of various Muslim groups, and Norquist did not help himself with social conservatives when he came out publicly in opposition to the federal Marriage Amendment. Rove had a rocky year himself, narrowly avoiding indictment for his involvement in the Valerie Plame affair.

In six short years as the White House's "political guru," not only has Karl Rove failed in his professed goal of building a permanent Republican majority, he has squandered a tremendous amount of the political capital that had been built up over three decades by Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan and their supporters. Rove has pressured Republicans to sacrifice conservative principles time and again in the name of maintaining Republican control of the White House and Congress. This consummate political pragmatist may have used the lessons he learned from Machiavelli's *Prince* to reach the pinnacle of political success. In the long run, however, it may all have been for naught. The supreme irony, of course—which the Karl Roves of the world never understand—is that pragmatism (as a guiding political philosophy) does not work in practice.

Now that the Rove era of Republican politics is coming to an end, the real question for conservatives is whether there is any hope of recapturing a Republican Party that has drifted far afield from its core conservative principles.

I think we can.

More than 40 years ago, Barry Goldwater attracted many idealistic young people to the conservative movement and the GOP by calling for a conservatism that would represent the "forgotten Americans"—the middle-class taxpayers who did not have a lobbyist in Washington and were not looking for loopholes in the law. Although Goldwater lost his presidential campaign, Reagan took that message of representing the average citizen all the way to the White House in the 1980 election.

What Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan built over three decades has been effectively destroyed by a coterie of Machiavellian pragmatists such as Rove and the neoconservatives who have seized control of the conservative movement and the Republican Party. It is time to sweep that crowd out of power and start over again as conservatives.

We can begin by standing up for our conservative principles and start representing those "forgotten Americans" once again. If we do that, the grassroots will soon be back with us. ©

## The Narrows

*by Catharine Savage Brosman*

This country is coarse cloth, folded roughly, crumpled,
crushed, or cut in pieces; I'm the needle,
threaded with desire, stitching it together by my eye,
using the center line. As I try to reason with it,
sort it out—sew Boulder Mountain to Grand Staircase,
Bryce, the Markagunt Plateau, Zion, then Nevada—

the folds resist, unyielding, multiplied; I'm barricaded,
patience, nerves, and time the only means
of plying through: creep down an anticline, straddle
backbone ridges, cross a cindered badland, climb
a checkered mesa, mole along a tunnel, skein
the switchbacks, drop into the park. It's not mirage;

I've got two days, before another desert run. What green
reward awaits? Severe, the patriarchs of sandstone
loom; great ponderosas keep their distance; piñon pine
and weathered juniper, hunkering in the upper
crevices, look petrified. In Zion Canyon, though,
beside the North Fork of the Virgin River, looping,

lolling through an ancient lake bed, meadows shimmer,
cool with reeds and willows; pools devise
ideas of emerald; manganese and iron run-offs streak
the cliffs near hanging gardens, watered
by the seepage—yellow, fuchsia, coral flowers,
leafy trains. Upstream, the walls close in, herding

cottonwoods and shadowing the current; in a round,
monolithic domes like Sacré-Coeur rise whitely.
Here, the road gives out. On foot, I reach
the buttresses and listen, cloistered, to the plain chant
of the river stones—then at the narrows, step
into the nave. Quiet and disquiet both: a cloudburst

would engulf the canyon, drowning everything; a single
rock, dislodged, contains my death; the dizzying
verticals give neck-cramps. Yet this is what
I wished to see, after the bath of barrenness,
the unrelenting light. So it is a choice of hermitage:
of sun or shade, a dry lament, a harsh and treeless

vision in the wilds, or refuge in a glade, but deepening,
and no escape save sky. Well, that's the price,
the body in its risks, its possibilities, the self alive
in antinomian illumination, always drawn
to the contrary world—as presence, passage, threshold
into being, with its wilds of sun, its dark, its vertigo.



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# Swiss Cheese and Fudge

## Clinton's Foreign Policy Legacy

### by George Ajjan

The Democrats' sweeping victory in the recent midterm elections has sent political shock waves around the world, especially in the Middle East—the focal point of President Bush's foreign policy on which the November election was largely a referendum. Judging by the jovial mood with which the region greeted American voters' desire for change, it seems that Arabs in general have reached the oversimplified conclusion that Democrats serve the interests of Middle East peace better than Republicans. For example, the postelection analysis of Arab political writer Sami Moubayed quotes even a Syrian Ba'ath Party leader who longs for "The America of Jimmy Carter and the one of Bill Clinton."

Clinton? While George W. Bush's wholesale adoption of dangerous neoconservative fantasies has certainly proved a dismal failure, those who long for the "good old days" of Clinton's peacemaking efforts need to refresh their memories with regard to the record. It is entirely likely that history will mark a pivotal turning point, *vis-à-vis* the peace process, at Clinton's victory in the 1992 presidential election, when third-party candidate H. Ross Perot took 19 percent of the popular vote and arguably deprived incumbent President George H.W. Bush of another four years to finish implementing his comprehensive Middle East vision. In retrospect, this appears a tragedy for the region, which has been locked in a downward spiral since George H.W. Bush left office almost 14 years ago.

Instead, Bill Clinton ascended in 1993—not the Armani-clad, 21st-century global sophisticate, but the international neophyte who arrived in Washington wearing plaid short-sleeved shirts and a digital wristwatch. Clinton clearly lacked the experience of his predecessor, a seasoned diplomat and former CIA chief. Bush's resumé boasted several foreign-policy triumphs, especially the assembling of the coalition of more than 30 nations, including many Arab countries, that drove the Iraqi army from Kuwait in the Gulf War.

Bush's true international genius, though, lay in his astute recognition of the war's aftermath. He knew that the routing of any Arab army by a Western power would have humiliating effects on the Arab psyche and disastrous long-term consequences, including the appeal of Islamic extremism. So Bush Senior wisely sought to offer the Arab leaders who backed him against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein a redemption of Arab dignity in the eyes of their people: a comprehensive "land for peace" proposal, allowing the Arabs a chance to stand together in making accords with Israel, bury the conflict definitively, and at last bring peace to the Middle East.

To garner the necessary commitments, Secretary of State James A. Baker III busily shuttled between Israel and her Arab neighbors Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine, constructing the framework for such unprecedented negotiations. The Madrid Peace Conference convened in October 1991, only eight months after the Gulf War ended, with a clear vision of regional peace unseen since.

By 1992, however, the Madrid plan had lost momentum as Bush's reelection looked increasingly tenuous. Clinton prevailed that November and immediately sought a separate legacy for himself as a trailblazing peacemaker. He abandoned the comprehensive Madrid solution and chose to handle each Arab nation's dealings with Israel disjointedly.

Clinton started by secretly whisking Palestinian negotiators off to Oslo to engage their Israeli counterparts. The subsequent 1993 White House handshake between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat introduced Palestinian sovereignty on the path to a two-state solution. Having then destroyed, like a bull in a china shop, the Arab unity that Bush and Baker had delicately cultivated, Clinton next checked off an Israel-Jordan peace treaty on his to-do list. Several years later, he finally got around to contemptuous Syria, which had bitterly resisted Clinton's divide-and-conquer approach.

Ostensibly, his multitrack strategy seemed promising. But for all the accolades which the mainstream media heaped on Clinton for his supposedly tireless peacemaking efforts, what did he really accomplish? In the twilight of his tenure, Clinton's efforts to reach an agreement between Israelis and Palestinians infamously failed—despite the charming photos of Prime Minister Ehud Barak and then-democratically elected Palestinian President Arafat interacting like old college buddies at Camp David—largely because the deal Clinton constructed had more holes than Swiss cheese. Even with just a few weeks left in the White House, he continued to urge the two leaders to return to Washington, presumably so that they could sign a treaty on a timeline best suited not to the millions of people it would affect, but to Clinton's own legacy and ego.

On the Syrian track, Clinton demonstrated equally irresponsible behavior. Shortly before his death, Syrian President Hafez Assad traveled to Geneva to meet his American counterpart after lengthy preparatory negotiating sessions, only to snub the final proposal after discovering that Clinton had misled him on the extent of Barak's willingness to make concessions. Considering that Clinton actually told his negotiating team to "find me a way to fudge" the details of the final arrangements for the Golan Heights, as author Clinton Swisher reveals in his book, *The Truth About the Camp David Accords*, the failed outcome hardly comes as a surprise.

In terms of Middle East peace, the impudently careless Clinton left the White House practically empty-handed. The United States had switched from George H.W. Bush's compre-

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hensive peace strategy to a divisive nation-focused tactic under Clinton—implemented in a shifty and dishonorable manner at that—and the results were horrendous. The Middle East looked a lot worse in 2001 than it had eight years earlier, regardless of the altruistic international reputation that the Democrats seem to enjoy.

Justly levying such criticism on Clinton, however, is certainly not the same as suggesting that all Republicans make good foreign policy, for after Clinton came George W. Bush. Every bit the international novice as his predecessor, Bush dramatically changed American policy once again by bringing into prominent advisory roles certain disaffected liberals commonly called neoconservatives, whose mission was to control the Middle East by exacerbating division among and within Arab countries.

Bush's advisors rejected his father's holistic view of the region and even Clinton's segregated nation-based approach to peacemaking. Their method, known as *taefi* in Arabic, stoked conflicts between competing subnational religious and ethnic groups as the Shiites, Druze, Sunnis, Alawites, Kurds, Maronites, *etc.* Given the neocons' objectives, their scheme had convincing historical precedent: The Ottoman Turks successfully ruled the Middle East for centuries with a sectarian administrative system of millets.

However, the Ottomans won at divide-and-conquer playing in their own backyard and, frankly, because they knew what they were doing. The neocons do not. They sold their ill-conceived plot to the American public wrapped in flowery rhetoric about democracy. But controlling the Middle East by exploiting sectarian rivalries requires substantially more than trite platitudes and shallow analyses rubber-stamped by untrustworthy exiled Arab yes-men, such as the Department of Defense's former Iraqi pet, Ahmed Chalabi. Thus, their policy has precipitated the glorious "new" Middle East that we see today, with Iraq descended into civil war, Iran swaggering with impunity, democratic elections having either endorsed dictatorship (Hosni Mubarak's landslide in Egypt) or legitimized terrorism (Hezbollah's and Hamas's big electoral wins in Lebanon and Palestine), and provocative Syria smugly gloating after correctly predicting America's failure on all of the above.

Rank-and-file Republicans should have resisted the neocons' foreign-policy ploy anyway, given our difficult experience with *taefi* politics in America's urban environments, where black, Hispanic, Asian, and other ethnic groups vie for power. Typically, GOP candidates would be lucky to earn 30 percent of the vote in such locales. This does not exactly demonstrate mastery of sectarian politics, even in U.S. cities where people speak English and pray on Sunday. Whence, therefore, came the arrogance to expect a winning *taefi* strategy in an infinitely more complex environment such as the Middle East?

Sooner or later, especially in the aftermath of their bruising defeat this November, the Republican base is going to realize just how badly they have been led astray. Looking toward 2008, therefore, the wily neocons may abandon the faltering GOP and look for a new home among the Democrats. There is no reason to believe that the hawkish likes of Hillary Clinton, emboldened by the midterm electoral outcome, would not take Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and other neocons into her inner circle. Woe to that Ba'athist who longed for Bill Clinton, because his Swiss-cheese-and-fudge approach could quite possibly return—only this time, with a vengeance. If it does, woe to America as well. ◁


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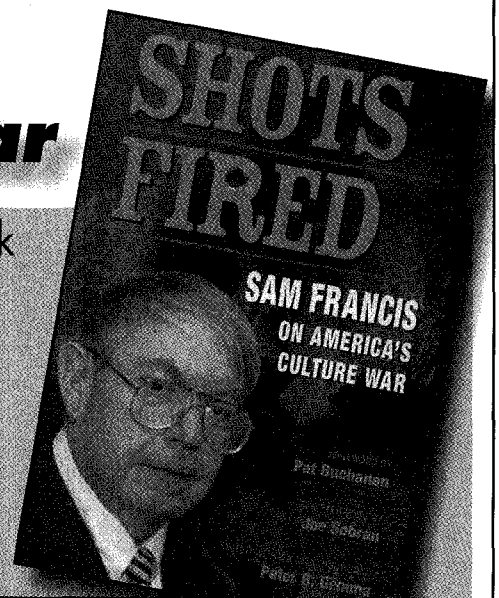


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# Patriotic Conservative

**by Aaron D. Wolf**

*"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear;*
*but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."*

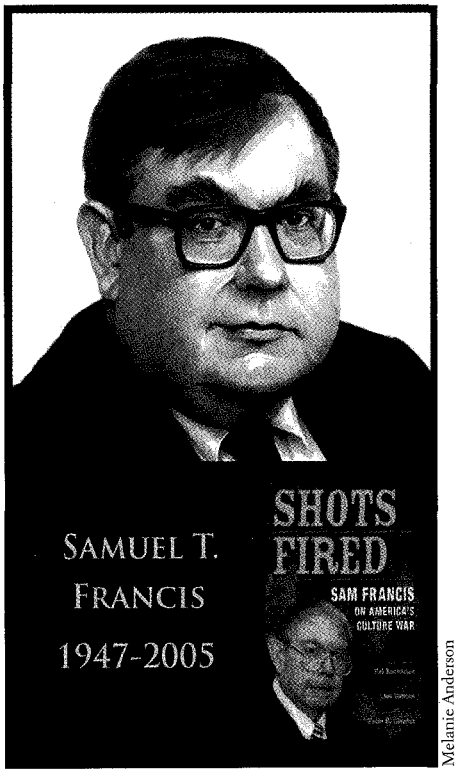
—2 Timothy 1:7

**Shots Fired: Sam Francis on America's Culture War**
*by Samuel Francis*
*Vienna, Virginia: FGF Books;*
*361 pp., $18.95*

◆

"When neither their property nor honour is touched," wrote Machiavelli, "the majority of men live content." The American people, it is safe to say, do not live content. Our property is subject to the whim of a thousand clones of Lonesome Rhodes who have telepromptered their way up to Capitol Hill, which magically qualifies them to look deep within themselves and ascertain a pretty fiction they call "public good." Like good little boys and girls, we understand that we are just too stupid, too clumsy, too hotheaded to wield our own weapons in defense of our own property. As for *honor*—well, isn't that a quaint little term? Long ago, during the days of slavery and universal bigotry, when fathers were despots and everyone hated blacks and women, people talked about honor. But honor means making distinctions, paying deference due a man—which suggests that some are deserving of it, while others are not. And that implies some sort of standards, derived not from popularity contest or press release, but from tradition—in other words, a civilization.

And *civilization* suggests a people to whom that civilization belongs, a nation, which then circumscribes that civilization in a particular place, a field of cultivation, a culture. In a civilization, we speak about *us* and *them*, *mine* and *yours*—my family, our Faith, *those* people and *their* peculiar ways. Man's contentedness, apart from questions of sin and grace, comes from flourishing in his native soil, loving his people and his place. The good prince does not interfere with this, or else, as Machiavelli adds, his people will not rise to defend him when he is attacked.



Melanie Anderson

Samuel Francis saw his people under attack and fought back. Armed with a deep understanding of political theory, a Machiavellian savvy, a devastating and inimitable prose style, and, above all, a singular sense of devotion to his people, Dr. Francis led the charge against the cultural elite and the "corporate, governmental, and academic bureaucracies that house and support [them]." While many professional conservatives were content to engage in petty skirmishes with their leftist cousins in the editorial pages of major newspapers and opinion journals, Sam was deep in Mordor, taking on the enemy by unmasking their strategies, their agendas, their lies. His untimely death nearly two years ago at age 57 deprived true American conservatives of one of their leading voices. As fellow culture warrior Clyde Wilson wrote in the wake of the news of his passing, "How can we ever fill such a huge gap in our ranks?"

For his labor of love, Dr. Francis was rewarded with the left's opprobrium and was repeatedly denounced by the professional right as an unpatriotic conservative, a racist, and a hatemonger. But, as Patrick J. Buchanan points out in his Foreword to *Shots Fired*, a new collection of some of Sam's best work—including several installments of his monthly *Chronicles* column, *Principalities & Powers*—his enemies did this because they feared him. "A racist is one who hates others for their race," writes Buchanan, "and Sam Francis did not hate anyone." The Samophobes would have us believe that love for our own means hate for everyone else—and we must mark well this strategy. For, as Dr. Francis wrote in these pages in 1994, in an article reprinted in *Shots Fired*,

> The function of the cultural elite in the managerial system is to provide legitimation, not only for itself but also for its siblings in government and corporation, and the calculated insults to and debunk-

*Aaron D. Wolf is* Chronicles' *associate editor.*



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ing of the culture of the American Heartland are an integral part of the revolutionary strategy the elite pursues and practices.

Thanks to the tireless work of Sam's friends—publisher Fran Griffin and editor Peter Gemma—*Shots Fired* will provide a new generation of Middle American Radicals with a stockpile of ammunition handloaded by Dr. Francis. His insights into the headlines of the day are so keen that they read as if they were written only yesterday. In page after page, he tips the sacred cows of the self-appointed cultural elites, unmasking the ways in which they seek to legitimize and expand *their* power by attacking *our* culture and its symbols. Thus, these articles are not driven by raw ideology, like those that penumbrate from the Fukuyamanic keyboards of the neoconservatives, nor are they turgid Coulteresque mock-pieces spewing venom in all directions: Sam's Machiavellian genius is tempered in each turn of phrase by patriotism, as he speaks in a language informed by his mentor, James Burnham, but accessible to the Middle American Radicals he wrote to defend.

Thus, he counsels conservatives who might be tempted to join hands with Jesse Jackson and Jonah Goldberg in denouncing the Confederate flag that the attack on that symbol "has nothing to do with 'slavery' or 'racism' or 'being offensive.' It has everything to do with destroying the power of one people and civilization and imposing the power of others." As for the Great Hate Crime of using the word *Christmas* in the days surrounding the winter solstice—we now have "holiday trees" and "winter break" and "Laura and I would like to wish you a happy Ramadan"—Sam observes that the real "controversy is about whether Christians can celebrate or even observe in public their own religious holidays in a country (or even local community) that is overwhelmingly Christian . . . " And when it comes to the multiculturalism being jammed down our throats through unlimited immigration and the bilingual education ("linguistic anarchy") that it demands, Sam agrees that "Everyone should grow up learning the traditions and culture their [*sic*] parents teach them," adding that "An even better way to learn it is for the immigrants to go back to their own countries and teach their kids there."

Dr. Francis described the "incestuous union" of the state and the economy that occurred under FDR as an embodiment of what Burnham called the "Managerial Revolution." Sam knew that, the revolution having taken full effect, the modern politician's first priority is to protect his own assets in a never-ending campaign. Thus, he was not swayed by the professional conservatives' demands for loyalty to the GOP. In the Managerial State, the Stupid Party, as he called it, cannot defy the cultural elite without risking delegitimization. Practically speaking, that means the cockeyed optimists who go to Washington seeking to end abortion or "gay marriage" will have to *get in, get out,* or *get run over*. The greatest danger is that they will, in fact, *get in*, imbibing and embracing the very leftism they had planned to resist. Which is the only way we can explain the Stupid Party's embrace of those vampires of the cultural elite, the neoconservatives, whose Israel First foreign policy has plunged us deep into the Mess-o-potamia and completed the Shiite Crescent across the Middle East.

When, in the pages of *Vanity Fair*, the neocons declared that they were taking their ball and going home (to the Evil Party?) on the eve of the GOP's great electoral disaster, we wished that Sam were here to offer another installment of his column. Now, we must turn to *Shots Fired*, to make sense of the Stupid Party's implosion and the neocons' retreat. These "liberals who mouthed a few conservative phrases and enjoyed the 'credibility' and 'respectability' that liberal elites conferred and movement conservatives craved" deceived the GOP and its Useful Idiot by "linking [patriotic] emotions to Iraq, rather than to the actual perpetrators of 9/11," which

> establish[ed] in the minds of many conservatives and Republicans what they had always heretofore lacked—legitimacy as conservative patriots—as well as a mass following that echoed its patriotic appeals.

That emotion has now been overwhelmed by grief, as the number of body bags returning from Iraq has exceeded the number of kills racked up by the still-at-large Osama bin Laden in 2001.

The aim of the neocons, writes Dr. Francis, has been "to muzzle whatever inclinations to an authentic, popular, grassroots, right-wing radicalism might emerge either within or without the Republican Party." As the Decider has said, "Mission accomplished." Under their leadership, the Stupid Party *got in*, embracing the wild leftism of Affirmative Action, unrestricted immigration, and a nation-building enthusiasm that must make Madeleine Albright blush. Conservatives now seek a federal solution to every problem, from fireproofing the American flag to legislating a definition of marriage.

One large faction of the Republican Party, the Christian Right, has swallowed the Managerial Agenda hook, line, and sinker, even though Big Government and the cultural elite that feeds it are the source of the widespread moral degeneration the Christian Right so passionately resists. Thus, even if they were to see a federal ban on all abortion,

> the Christian Right would have done absolutely nothing to strip the federal government of the power it has seized throughout this century, restore a proper understanding and enforcement of the Constitution and of republican government, prevent the inundation of the country by anti-Western immigrants, stop the cultural and racial dispossession of the historic American people, or resist the absorption of the American nation into a multicultural and multiracialist globalist regime.

For Sam Francis, the battle was not Democrats *versus* Republicans or neoconservatives *versus* paleoconservatives: The enemy was the Managerial State, which includes all of the major media and both political parties. As it was the American nation being assaulted by that system, it was up to the people—his Middle American Radicals—to see the Beast for what it is and engage in its own revolution "from the middle." That revolution begins not at the polls but in our homes, where the media elite is brainwashing us and our children through its version of "the news" and its nonstop blabbering about equality and diversity—in a word, *hatemongering*. For those Americans who wish to see their culture restored, "the most revolutionary act they could perpetrate would be simply to turn off the television [and] cancel their subscriptions to most magazines . . . " Absent the constant hatemongering of the cultural elite, they might recover the honor and even patriotism that once defined us as a people. ◁



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# Men of Letters

**by Clyde Wilson**

**Reinventing the South: Versions of a Literary Region**
*by Mark Royden Winchell*
*Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press; 253 pp., $39.95*

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George Garrett, *Chronicles*' most distinguished contributing editor, can be relied upon, always, to tell it like it is. He is doing just that when he writes in a blurb to *Reinventing the South*: "[T]hese essays are splendidly written—mercifully free of contemporary critical jargon and easily accessible to the good and serious reader." And he amplifies this description of Professor Winchell's work with a reference to "high intelligence joining wit, good humor, and common sense."

Though not in Garrett's class as a critic (or anything else), I had the same reaction. Winchell compliments two of his mentors in Southern literature, Walter Sullivan and Monroe K. Spears, when he judges them to be not just academics but genuine men of letters. These essays justify awarding the same honorable title to Winchell himself.

Professor Winchell, biographer of Donald Davidson and Cleanth Brooks, devotes a lot of attention to the Agrarians and their disciples. He has interesting new things to say about Robert Penn Warren, and his "Arkansas Traveler" is the best treatment I have seen of that difficult subject, John Gould Fletcher. Other essays take up William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, William Humphrey, and Cormac McCarthy. But these are more than literary discussions. Winchell's merit lies especially in his ability to relate these writers, their works, and the reception of those works to the larger theme of the South, its role and its images in the American story. For instance, he understands the relevance of the Agrarians to the ongoing attempts to suppress and slander the Confederate flag. The flag's enemies, as he felicitously puts it, regard it as "the symbol of a terrorist group who tried to overthrow the U.S. government."

That is only one sample of Winchell's many happy turns of phrase. Another is his statement about McCarthy: "[H]e has the courage of his perversions." The essay on McCarthy was written before that writer's *No Country for Old Men* was available. Before I read that book, I would have agreed with Winchell about McCarthy's irredeemable nihilism. But as Chilton Williamson wrote in these pages, *No Country for Old Men* does seem to show a glimmer of humanity and has changed my opinion. Perhaps it will change Winchell's, too.

*Clyde Wilson is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History of the University of South Carolina.*

# A World Safe for Stalinism

**by Tom Piatak**

**My Dear Mr. Stalin: The Complete Correspondence of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph V. Stalin**
*by Susan Butler*
*New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; 384 pp., $35.00*

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Long ago, a British veteran of World War II offered this sober moral judgment on the war:

> It was just such a sunny, breezy Mediterranean day two years before when he read of the Russo-German alliance, when a decade of shame seemed to be ending in light and reason, when the enemy was plain in view, huge and hateful, all disguise cast off; the modern age in arms.
>
> Now that hallucination was dissolved, like the whales and turtles on the voyage from Crete, and he was back after less than two years' pilgrimage in a Holy Land of illusion in the old ambiguous world, where priests were spies and gallant friends proved traitors and his country was led blundering into dishonour.

The occasion for the disillusionment of the hero of Evelyn Waugh's masterful World War II trilogy was, of course, news of the alliance between Great Britain and the Soviet Union. But most Anglo-American historians lack the moral sense of Waugh, whose service in Yugoslavia allowed him to see firsthand the type of "allies" the West was helping to bring to power throughout Eastern Europe and who realized that an alliance with Soviet Russia would inevitably stain the honor of America and Britain. Instead, most Anglo-American historians subscribe to what Norman Davies terms the "Allied Scheme of History," which is marked by "The ideology of 'anti-fascism,' in which the Second World War . . . is perceived as 'the War against Fascism' and as the defining event in the triumph of Good over Evil," "[a] demonological fascination with Germany," an "[i]ndulgent, romanticized view of . . . the Soviet Union," "[t]he unspoken acceptance of the division of Europe into Eastern and Western spheres," and "[t]he studied neglect of all facts which do not add credence to the above." According to Davies, this view "was the natural residue of a state of affairs where allied soldiers could be formally arrested for saying that Hitler and Stalin 'are equally evil.'"

At least in intent, Susan Butler's collection of the complete correspondence of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin falls squarely in the Allied Scheme of History. The book is dedicated to the "405,000 Americans and 27,000,000 Russians who died in World War II." Her dedication, however, fails to mention the two million people deported from eastern Poland, the Baltic States, and Rumania in 1939 and 1940 to die in the Gulag; the seven million Soviet citizens killed in the camps during World War II; the million POWs (including Finns and Poles) killed by the Soviets during World War II; or the million members of minority nationalities, such as the Volga Germans and Crimean Tatars, who perished in the Gulag during the war, not to mention the five to six million who died there following World War II after being repatriated (sometimes with British and American help) from territory that had been occupied by the Nazis. Indeed, the huge number of Russian casualties listed by Butler includes millions killed by Stalin, not Hitler, as Norman Davies notes.

Butler's book begins with a Foreword by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who reports with a straight face that "Roosevelt had no illusions about Stalin's Russia." Butler insists that the notorious Joseph Davies, one of FDR's sycophantic ambassadors to Moscow during the war, "was neither an apologist for Stalin nor pro-Communist" and quotes with approval the descrip-



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tion of Yalta offered by FDR's interpreter, Charles Bohlen: "Stalin held all the cards and played them well. Eventually, we had to throw in our hand."

However, as this correspondence between Roosevelt and Stalin makes clear, the West had folded to "Uncle Joe" long before Yalta; Roosevelt simply never attempted to put any pressure on Stalin at all and threw away the cards he did possess without attempting to get anything in return. Indeed, FDR was soft on communism long before Yalta, rushing to extend diplomatic recognition to Stalinist Russia in 1933. As Butler notes, "Roosevelt is determinedly friendly" in his correspondence with Stalin. FDR told Adm. William Leahy early in the war that "I do not think we need to worry about any possibility of Russian domination," while, with respect to Lend-Lease, Roosevelt's attitude was that "whatever Stalin wanted, Stalin would get." Indeed, FDR's goal throughout the war was the establishment of an international order dominated by what he termed "the Four Policemen": the United States, Great Britain, China, and the Soviet Union. From the start, Roosevelt viewed Stalin as a partner, not an adversary or even a rival.

Their correspondence begins with a glowing description of Stalin as "an austere, rugged, determined figure" by Harry Hopkins, who was dispatched to Moscow in July 1941 to impress upon Stalin "the determination of the President . . . to extend all possible aid to the Soviet Union at the earliest possible time." Overruling the Pentagon, Roosevelt insisted that the aid sent to Russia was unconditional and that no effort be made to seek information concerning Soviet armaments or military plans. On March 7, 1942, Roosevelt wrote to all U.S. war agencies, informing them that he "wished all material promised to the Soviet Union . . . to be released for shipping . . . at the earliest possible date regardless of the effect of these shipments on any other part of the war program." Roosevelt never wavered from this policy, and Butler presents numerous examples of Roosevelt castigating subordinates for being too slow in responding to Stalin's demands or for thinking that maybe the United States should get something in return for all the aid being showered on Stalin. FDR had no problem seeing things from the Russian point of view, telling an administrator in charge of sending materiel to the Soviets that, "Frankly, if I were a Russian I would feel that I had been given the run-around in the United States."

Throughout the war, Roosevelt was supremely confident in his ability to influence Stalin and determined to demonstrate to Uncle Joe how trustworthy he was. Roosevelt told Churchill that "I think I can personally handle Stalin better than either your Foreign Office or my State Department"; in April 1942, the U.S. ambassador passed along to Stalin Roosevelt's belief that "if the two of you could sit down together and talk over matters there would never be any lack of understanding between our countries." Roosevelt felt the key to his "success" with Stalin was his own trustworthiness: "The only reason we stand so well with the Russians is that up to date we have kept our promises." Unfortunately for the peoples of Eastern Europe, the policy of exchanging good American promises for worthless Soviet ones ultimately encouraged the "Russian domination" that FDR professed not to worry about.

The moral stain inherent in the alliance with Stalin becomes most clear when considered in light of Poland, the supposed beneficiary of Britain's declaration of war in 1939. As early as the Casablanca conference in January 1943, FDR was throwing away a bargaining chip that might have been used to preserve Poland's independence by announcing that the war would end only with the unconditional surrender of the Axis Powers. Roosevelt got nothing in return for his attempt to alleviate Stalin's paranoia. Indeed, even after the Allies had pledged themselves to a policy of unconditional surrender, Stalin repeatedly expressed concern that the Americans and British were negotiating a separate peace with Germany.

The betrayal of Poland began in earnest in April 1943, when the Soviets broke diplomatic relations with the Polish government in exile in London because the Poles had called for an investigation of the murder of thousands of captured Polish officers in the Katyn Forest. Stalin wrote to Roosevelt that this was "absolutely abnormal and contrary to all rules and standards governing relations between allied countries" and "a vile fascist slander." FDR reassured Stalin that the call for an investigation of Katyn was a "stupid mistake" and that "Churchill will find ways . . . of getting the Polish Government . . . to act with more common sense." (Of course, we now know what the Poles merely suspected in 1943: The thousands butchered at Katyn were killed by the Soviets, not the Nazis.)

The plot thickened at the Tehran Conference, where Roosevelt and Churchill essentially agreed to allow Stalin to keep the eastern part of Poland he had seized in 1939, without bothering to inform the Poles of this secret arrangement. Churchill told the *New York Times* that Tehran marked a "melding of minds, a union of spirit." Who needed the Poles, when you had Uncle Joe in your corner?

After Tehran, the Poles could not expect even lip service from Roosevelt or Churchill. In March 1944, Churchill threatened to tell Parliament that, in view of the disagreements between Stalin and the Polish government, all questions of territorial change must await a postwar armistice; until then, Britain could recognize no forcible transfer of territory. Stalin responded by threatening that "if you make such a speech I shall consider that you have committed an act of injustice and unfriendliness toward the Soviet Union." Churchill meekly deleted the offending portions of his speech; after Yalta, he actually defended just such a forcible transfer of territory in Parliament, telling the House of Commons that "I know of no government which stands to its obligations . . . more solidly than the Russian Soviet government."

Those who view Churchill as an unblemished hero should carefully consider those words, spoken by the prime minister not only in the knowledge that he was lying but knowing that his brave words of defiance to the Nazis in 1939 and 1940 had been paid for, in part, with Polish blood, both in resistance to the Nazi invasion in 1939 and in the defense of Great Britain. In the crucial days of September and October 1940, Polish pilots constituted between an eighth and a quarter of the pilots available to Fighter Command for the defense of London and accounted for 18 percent of German planes destroyed on September 11, 14 percent on September 15, 25 percent on September 19, and 48 percent of all German planes destroyed on September 26. As Air Chief Marshall Dowding admitted after the Battle of Britain, "had it not been for the magnificent material contributed by the Polish squadrons and their unsurpassed gallantry I hesitate to say that the outcome of the battle would have been the same." For this "unsurpassed gallantry," the Poles received at Yalta what the Czechs had received at Munich—the subjugation



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of their country—with one difference: This time, Churchill defended the betrayal in Parliament.

Unlike Churchill, Roosevelt did not utter even occasional expressions of sympathy for the Poles. In February 1944, he cabled Stalin: "I fully appreciate your desire to deal only with a Polish Government in which you can repose confidence and which can be counted on to establish friendly relations with the Soviet Union." Later that year, Roosevelt undermined the Polish government in London by telling Stalin that he was hoping for "the formation of an interim legal and truly representative Polish Government." So much for the legal and representative Polish government that already existed. In December 1944, FDR begged Stalin, as a face-saving gesture, to delay recognizing the puppet government he had created in Poland until Yalta:

> There was no suggestion in my request that you curtail your practical relations with the Lublin Committee nor any thought that you should deal with or accept the London Government in its present composition . . . I cannot, from a military angle, see any great objection to a delay of a month.

When Stalin rebuffed Roosevelt and told him that the presidium of the Supreme Soviet (over which Stalin claimed to be powerless) had already recognized the Polish Communist government, Roosevelt was understanding, writing to Stalin on February 6, 1945, that "I am determined that there shall be no breach between ourselves and the Soviet Union" and that "I hope I do not have to assure you that the United States will never lend its support in any way to any provisional government in Poland that would be inimical to your interests." Thus did a war that began to preserve Poland's independence end up handing over to the communists Poland (including what had been the Polish portions of the Ukraine and Byelorussia), together with East Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania.

Far from resisting this denouement, FDR facilitated it. Ignoring the advice of the military, setting greater importance on compliance with Soviet requests for aid than on "any other part of the war program," he got nothing in return for the massive amounts of materiel sent to the Soviet Union. Roosevelt always envisioned the Soviet Union as a partner in the postwar world, and he never sought to put the slightest pressure on Stalin to alter the Soviets' rather different postwar plan of domination in Eastern Europe. Roosevelt's actions toward the Soviet Union were in fact indefensible, as this collection of his correspondence with Stalin makes clear.

*Tom Piatak writes from Cleveland, Ohio.*

# The West on the Brink

**by Herbert Arthur Scott Trask**

**The War of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West**
*by Niall Ferguson*
*New York: The Penguin Press; 808 pp., $32.95*

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We do not hear much about the Armenian genocide of 1915. Even less well known is the Turk's expulsion of the Greeks of Western Anatolia and the Pontic coast in the years after World War I. At Smyrna, Greek and Armenian Christians were literally driven into the sea or massacred. Shockingly, nearly 20 British, French, and American warships stood offshore, observing. "What better symbol could be imagined of the decline of the West," writes British historian Niall Ferguson, "than the brutal expulsion of the heirs of Hellenic civilization from Asia Minor—except perhaps the utter failure of the heirs of ancient Greek democracy to do anything to prevent it?"

While agreeing wholeheartedly, I can't help but recall Ferguson's previous book, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (2004), which argues that Turkey should be welcomed into the European Union. "The economic case has been growing stronger," what with all that cheap labor available, and the "strategic arguments . . . are compelling." (Ferguson thinks it will "bind Turkey to the West.") The argument goes something like this: A "European" Turkey will serve not only as a buffer against Middle Eastern disorder but as a model for moderate, Westernized Islam. (We were told the same thing about Iraq.) The alternative is an embittered "Islamofascist" Turkey, bent on taking revenge upon the West.

The explicit threat—let us in, or we'll become your enemy—is reason enough to toss out the membership application, but strategic considerations should rule it out anyway. Consider what the admission of Turkey to the European Union would mean. It would extend the borders of "Europe" deep into Central Asia, creating an indefensible promontory, and allow Syria, Iraq, and Iran to share a border with Europe. It would set a precedent for the admission of additional non-European and Islamic countries. (Already Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia, and Morocco have been mentioned in this connection.) It would flood Europe with millions of Turkish, and millions more Middle Eastern and Central Asian, migrants, who would trudge across the new "bridge" to Europe. Why import such dangerous diversity? This is especially lethal in an age of Islamic terrorism, when, as Ferguson himself writes, "it takes only a few would-be martyrs within a single Muslim community to produce a calamity." The price of safety for such multicultural indulgences, across Europe and North America, is already being paid: a progressive shrinking of our traditional freedoms.

Professor Ferguson is known for both his scholarly productivity and his media ubiquity. In addition to his numerous books, he writes a regular column for the London *Telegraph* and short articles for American magazines, and he has written and presented three television documentaries for the BBC, each adapted from one of his books—*Empire*, *Colossus*, and now *The War of the World*. The common theme running through them all is the necessity of "liberal" (*i.e.*, anglophone) empire to progress, stability, and civilization. A secondary theme is the strategic blundering that undid the Western imperium. Yet many of the greatest blunders go unnoticed by Mr. Ferguson.

Nowhere in *War of the World* does he define "the West," which is a significant failure. As Ferguson himself admits, "to define is to delimit" and, hence, to exclude; and he doesn't want to do that. Exclusion is incompatible with the free movement of labor that is essential to the globalism Ferguson sees as the highest expression of capitalism and liberal empire in its economic aspect. So when he does define the West—in an article in *Vanity*



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*Fair* ("Empire Falls," October 2006)—he does so ideologically, as "that distinctive complex of beliefs and institutions which originated with the Greeks," leaving the door open to anyone in the world willing to pay lip service to certain platitudes. I would argue that the West is what it is—a geography, a people, and a history—and that Islam and other Eastern religions are excluded from it by definition.

By the descent of the West, Ferguson means two things: first, the descent of Western civilization into the barbarism, cruelty, and destruction that marked the years between 1914 and 1945; and, second, the catastrophic result, "the decomposition of the European empires that had dominated the world at the beginning of the century." In 1900, the West ruled the world, and an Englishman could travel across it in ease and comfort without a passport. After the devastating warfare of 1914-18 and 1939-45, Ferguson laments, both conditions were lost. Thus, it is British and European imperial decline that concerns him, together with the suicidal warfare that he sees as its chief cause—not the cultural, moral, and demographic decline, which he does discuss in the aforementioned *Vanity Fair* article.

Much of *War of the World* chronicles the savage and horrific violence that characterized the first half of the 20th century. To explain this, Ferguson invokes a "fatal formula" of ethnic conflict, economic volatility, and imperial decline. It all started with a rise in racial and national thinking, which inhibited the assimilation of minorities and created a dangerous aspiration for national unity and self-determination. All that was necessary for a conflagration was political fragmentation and economic hardship, and, when those followed in the aftermath of the Great War, it was only a matter of time before the match was struck.

It is an explanation worthy of a social scientist, pleasing to the advocates of an American world empire. But history is more complicated than that. Albert Camus believed in the "general culpability of a civilization" and pointed to "the historic responsibilities of Western nihilism." Georges Bernanos saw in National Socialism a "return to pagan Rome." Sophia Scholl, a German patriot who was executed in 1943 for distributing anti-Nazi leaflets, believed that Europe's turn away from God left it vulnerable to the lies of the Adversary. "Whoever still doubts the reality, the existence, of demonic powers has failed by a wide margin to understand the metaphysical background of this war."

There was a political background as well, but it was not imperial break-up. While not slighting the demoralizing effects of "inflation, over-industrialization, and unemployment," Simone Weil cited "the humiliation of 1918." Camus, her compatriot and fellow member of the French resistance, agreed. "In Germany, shaken by calamitous war, by defeat, and by economic distress, values no longer existed." Jorge Luis Borges, who, in 1938, admitted to being "devastated" by Germany's "chaotic descent into darkness," nevertheless did not blame her for repudiating an unjust and vindictive postwar settlement. "I find it normal for the Germans to reject the treaty of Versailles. (There is no good European who does not detest that ruthless contrivance.)"

Ferguson does not see it that way. In *The Pity of War* (1999), his mildly revisionist study of World War I and the predecessor of *The War of the World*, he absolves the Treaty of Versailles of any responsibility for the emergence of a virulent form of German revanchism. "The real problem with the peace was not that it was too harsh, but that the Allies failed to enforce it." Ferguson even faults John Maynard Keynes, the author of the brilliant exposé *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919), for contributing to the undeserved "guilty feeling of having wronged Germany which so inhibited British diplomacy between the two wars." He is right to suggest that the Germans shot themselves in the foot trying to lighten the burden of reparations (they deliberately inflated their currency and ran up large deficits) but omits to mention that they would never have adopted such desperate expedients without the indemnity. He apparently regards the war-guilt clause as so unimportant that he lets it go unmentioned, and he sees the loss of German colonies and contiguous territories as insignificant. He also ignores Britain's starvation blockade of Germany, which continued until Germany signed the infamous treaty.

In crafting their punitive peace, the Anglo-French victors ignored Machiavelli's admonition to avoid the middle policy when treating a defeated enemy. He must either be crushed or conciliated; halfway measures simply temper resentment with the hope of revenge. As Germany did not deserve to be crushed, she should have been conciliated. Second, England and France acquiesced in the Bolshevik takeover of Russia. (Their intervention was half-hearted and quickly abandoned.) This was more than stupid and shortsighted; it was a betrayal of their Russian allies.

Ferguson is correct about the miscalculations of Whitehall diplomacy leading up to the war. The British increased the probability of war by signing the Triple Entente in 1904, thus completing the diplomatic and military encirclement of Germany. Then they needlessly turned a continental war into a worldwide one by backing France in 1914. This is the most controversial argument of Ferguson's *Pity of War*: A German victory on the Continent would have threatened neither England nor her empire. Not so a German defeat, which gravely weakened both. Hence the "pity" of a war Ferguson considers "the greatest error of modern history."

That raises questions that Ferguson grapples with in *War of the World*. Why did Britain's leaders choose to take part in the final act of Western imperial suicide? By declaring war on Germany in 1939, did they not repeat the error of 1914? Why not come to an understanding with Hitler, allowing him a free hand in Eastern Europe, in return for leaving Western Europe and the British Empire alone? Ferguson's answer is that Hitler could not be trusted, that his Luftwaffe and Kriegsmarine posed a lethal threat to the homeland. Britain had to fight, again. But was that not to will the final act of destruction? Ferguson perceives a way out of the grim dilemma: preemptive war. Britain and France should have gone to war in 1938 over the Sudetenland: "Germany was simply not ready for a European war in 1938."

But were the French and British people ready for such a military adventure, especially one that might have turned into a long, hard fight? This assumption appears to be what Ferguson elsewhere derides as "counter-factual without political plausibility." He imagines a quick Anglo-French victory, achieved with the help of the Soviet Union. But Ferguson does not take into account the power of nationalism—an habitual weakness of the neoconservative mind. (Consider Iraq.) When allied tanks rumbled into the Rhineland, outraged Germans would have rallied behind Hitler and fought like tigers in defense of their violated homeland. In such a war, Germany would have appeared, and would have had some



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claim to be, the aggrieved party, especially had the Red Army attacked from the east. (We must keep in mind that the evil of the Hitler regime was not yet revealed in its totality.) And even had the Germans been overcome, would their defeat have led to a lasting peace, or merely a third European war?

Instead, the British should have followed a policy of containment, an option Ferguson does not consider. They could have declared a western security perimeter (France, Belgium, Holland, and Norway) and continued to rearm, thus putting Hitler's professions of good will toward the West to the test. If the war had come anyway (either because Hitler attacked them, or because they decided they could not tolerate the death camps), they would have been better prepared than they were in 1939.

Ferguson rightly considers the Allied victory to have been morally "tainted"; wrongly, he believes that taint unavoidable. For instance, he justifies the terror bombing of German cities on the grounds of military necessity: It impeded German armament production and forced the Luftwaffe to withdraw antiaircraft guns and fighter planes from the Eastern Front. True, but utilitarian considerations cannot justify murdering civilians and destroying cities.

Ferguson defends the Soviet alliance on similar grounds. (One must on occasion ally oneself with a lesser evil in order to defeat a greater one.) But was that alliance really necessary, or was it merely expedient? The Atlantic powers could have waged a separate war against Nazi Germany and, after defeating her, declared war on Soviet Russia. (Solzhenitsyn has been making this argument for 60 years.) Another option: They might have offered the Germans generous peace terms, on condition that they overthrow Hitler and prosecute the Nazi leadership for war crimes. This strategy might have induced the Wehrmacht divisions in the west to surrender, thereby shortening the war and keeping the Red Army out of Central Europe.

In 1934, Lord Chatterfield observed that "we have got most of the world already or the best parts of it, and we only want to keep what we have got and to prevent others from taking it away from us." It was sound advice then, but even more so today, when overpopulation, resource scarcity, water shortages, climate change, and environmental crisis threaten the world. It remains the most vital task of Western statesmanship to act upon it.

*Herbert Arthur Scott Trask's "Condy Raguet and the Northern Jeffersonian Tradition" and "The Civil War and the Fall of the Federal Republic" are both nearing completion.*

# No Longer a Constitution?

**by Stephen B. Presser**

**Not a Suicide Pact: The Constitution in a Time of National Emergency**
*by Richard A. Posner*
*New York: Oxford University Press; 171 pp., $18.95*

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What is the relationship between the U.S. Constitution and the current struggle against the perpetrators of *jihad* against the West? Should the masterminds of, and participants in, the suicide bombings of September 11 and other terrorist acts be protected by the Bill of Rights and the Geneva Conventions? In several important decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court and other federal courts, judges have declared that the Geneva Conventions and the Fifth Amendment's Due Process Clause provide protections for suspected terrorists and that the executive branch must seek the authority of Congress before it can try captured Al Qaeda fighters in military tribunals, as President Bush has sought to do. One federal judge has declared that, before the administration may eavesdrop on conversations between suspected foreign terrorists and those in the United States, it must seek warrants under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act from a special court designated by Congress for that purpose. The *New York Times* and several other newspapers have recently published information on a classified program of government data mining, designed to ferret out transfers of funds to suspected terrorist organizations. Should the publishing of such information be punished as a criminal violation?

In a provocative little volume, Richard Posner, America's leading legal scholar, examines the relationship between national security and the Constitution and determines the conduct of the Bush administration to be perfectly appropriate, even if the letter of the Constitution may have been violated. Borrowing from a famous statement made by Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson in 1949, Posner observes that the Constitution is not a "suicide pact" and that, if a chief executive believes that the nation is being threatened, the Constitution should not be allowed to stand in the way of appropriate measures to defend her. Posner is a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, where he has gained a reputation for being as interested in arriving at judicial results that reach practical conclusions as he is in following precedent—and perhaps more interested.

As a law professor at the University of Chicago, Posner was one of the founders of a school of pragmatic legal analysis known as "law and economics," probably the most important legal intellectual development in the late 20th century. Indeed, much, if not most, of the best legal scholarship in the last two decades has been devoted to the discussion of Posner and his ideas. Richard Posner believes that the purpose of law is to increase the national welfare (in his early days, he described this as the pursuit of "efficiency" in the law), and he is today what might be described as the country's leading legal pragmatist. Although federal judges and American law professors have seldom achieved fame for their firm grasp of practical realities, Posner has actually accomplished this feat. In a remarkable volume on the Clinton impeachment, he concluded that both those who sought to remove the President on the grounds that he had committed perjury, tampered with witnesses, and lied to a grand jury and those who sought to contest his removal by arguing that Clinton had done nothing more than unwisely engage in a tryst with a nubile intern were right. The Clinton imbroglio, he argued, was essentially the result of an insufficiently sensitive Supreme Court that never should have allowed a lawsuit against a sitting President (Paula Jones' sexual-harassment case) to go forward until he was out of office. Had the Jones suit never been brought, Clinton, of course, would never have been tempted to lie about his dalliance with Monica Lewinsky, and the country would have been spared the national embarrassment, distraction, and litigation that ensued. Posner also published one of the best analyses of the Bush-Gore election controversy of 2000,



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pragmatically concluding that, this time, the Supreme Court (which handed Bush the election) was correct in doing so, in order to avoid national and international chaos. Posner, sitting a rung below the justices, appears to feel equally comfortable in praising and criticizing the Supreme Court. Were he appointed to the Court, his intellectual independence might well be compromised. On the other hand, his firm grasp on reality might have enabled him to save the Court from at least some of its recent mistakes. Take, for example, its decision in *Hamdan* v. *Rumsfeld* (2006), where the Court ruled five to three (Chief Justice Roberts recused himself, as he had previously ruled on the case from a lower court) that the military commissions established by President Bush to conduct criminal trials of alleged alien terrorists violated the Constitution because Congress had not previously acted to authorize them, and because Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions applies to Al Qaeda detainees. The latter provides that trials of offenders who were not participants in an "international conflict" must take place before a "regularly constituted court affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples." But President Bush's military tribunals were *ad hoc* entities, so, according to the five majority justices, they failed to meet the requirements of Article 3. *Hamdan* came down two years after the Court's opinion in *Hamdi* v. *Rumsfeld* (2004), in which a similar majority had ruled that terrorists with American citizenship captured on foreign soil are entitled to procedural rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

*Hamdan*, Prof. Diane Orentlicher of American University has argued, demonstrated that "our constitutional system of law remains vibrant even when it comes to non-Americans captured in a theater of war." *Hamdan* came down too late to be considered in *Not a Suicide Pact*, but Posner would doubtless have been more skeptical in his response to it. It is noteworthy that a congressional statute—passed before *Hamdan* was decided—expressly denied suspected terrorists such as Salim Ahmed Hamdan jurisdiction to bring such lawsuits in the federal courts; as Justices Scalia, Thomas, and Alito noted in dissent, the Court was blatantly wrong to ignore this statute, despite the fact that the U.S. Constitution expressly grants Congress the right to suspend lawsuits over such detention. Justice Thomas even went so far as to suggest, correctly, that Hamdan, as an illegal combatant, was not protected by the Geneva Conventions. (Article 3 was written to cover civil wars, not international terrorism.) Justice Thomas added that, even if Article 3 applied, President Bush's *ad hoc* military tribunals would have met the requirements of the Geneva Conventions and that the President already had authority to set up those special tribunals because of previous congressional action. Posner shows some sympathy for according detainees *habeas corpus* (the right to sue to force the government to prove a legal basis for holding a prisoner), but only as consistent with the governing statutes, making it likely that he would have sided with Scalia, Thomas, and Alito. Indeed, even if such protection were mandated by our Constitution and laws, "modern terrorism is so dangerous, and so unlike ordinary crime, that the ordinary processes of criminal justice must be modified. The terrorist problem is sui generis; so should be the solution to it." Posner adds, quoting Prof. Martin Sheffer, "during an emergency the law of necessity supersedes the law of the Constitution."

If it is true that the jihadists are like no other enemy we have faced, perhaps at least certain constitutional protections should not be invoked in their favor. Posner argues that, "Like any brittle thing, a constitution that will not bend will break" and that a rigid insistence on reading that document, as exhibited by "civil libertarians" such as the ACLU, as an impediment to efforts to frustrate the jihadists, especially through the gathering of intelligence, is "excessive" and "irresponsible." Posner clearly favors the criminal prosecution of journalists who publish classified information, such as the government's data-mining activities. As he puts it,

> I argue that an American version of the British Official Secrets Act may be needed in order to seal leaks of classified material that are harmful to national security or that invade personal privacy, and such a law would not violate the Constitution.

Posner does have confidence in the media to expose governmental wrongdoers, as well as in legislation protecting whistle-blowers against retaliation and laws punishing government personnel for misconduct, but he believes that government officials—the President, in particular—must be given the tools necessary for conducting national defense. In weighing the constitutional right to privacy against the safety of the nation, he would tip the balance toward national security and away from individual privacy.

Posner's model for the kind of balancing he suggests is Lincoln's suspension of the Constitution during the Civil War, an act that some find unnecessary and inappropriate. Indeed, another legal maxim, one that is less frequently quoted than Justice Jackson's, holds: "*Fiat Justicia, Ruat Coelum.*" ("Let justice be done, though the heavens fall.") An argument for suspending the rule of law in order to save the Constitution—which is essentially Posner's argument—obviously is willing to contemplate the risk of tyranny. One might go further to suggest that another utterance of Justice Jackson (used by Posner as an opening quote) might be understood to imply that that risk is unacceptable: "The choice is not between order and liberty. It is between liberty with order and anarchy without either." When the alternative really is mass destruction, perhaps Posner gets the balance right. When the somewhat misguided "civil libertarian" majority of the U.S. Supreme Court clearly misconstrues international agreements such as the Geneva Conventions, as they did in *Hamdan*, there is cause for alarm. Those conventions, as *San Diego Union-Tribune* writer Robert J. Caldwell has recently observed,

> were clearly intended to set rules for conflicts between nation states, not to extend protected prisoner-of-war status to international terrorists who deliberately murder civilians and represent no government or nation.

Where the Court itself departs from the rule of law, it may indeed be necessary to save the country from the Court—which is exactly what Richard Posner is trying to do.

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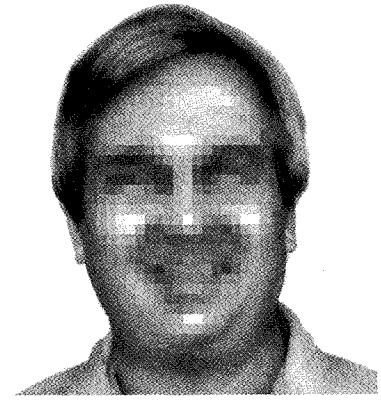
*by Joe Ecclesia*

# Waste of Space



Your Excellency:

Is the winter hiatus between Christmastide and Lent regarded by you men of the cloth as a sort of midterm break, a chance to loosen your clericals and put your feet up, so to speak? If so, I trust my letter finds you in robust health and with time to ponder some thoughts regarding our diocesan newspaper.

On the Wednesday before Advent, my weekly diocesan newspaper arrived, as usual, crisp and fresh in the mail. Although long experience has taught me to toss the paper in the trash without so much as a glance at its contents—my reasons for doing so, Your Excellency, will soon be clear—on this particular afternoon, I beat down my prejudices and opened the paper. With the approach of the Christmas season, I was looking for some juice to jump-start my sputtering spiritual engine. Surely, I reasoned, a Catholic newspaper would devote space to Advent, to special prayers, to Scripture readings, to family traditions.

Nothing. *Nada.* This issue of the *Catholic Herald* contained no Advent page, no review of Advent practices, no articles on the efficacy or practice of prayer, no reminder even of Advent itself. Instead, Church news and articles on good works (that word *good* being open to interpretation) so filled the columns of the *Catholic Herald* that some innocent readers might conclude that we Catholics really do believe in working our way into Heaven.

Since your name appears under *Publisher,* and since I know you don't agree with some of these articles, I assume that you, like me, consign each issue of the paper to your own wastebasket without bothering to read the contents. Perhaps, however, we both need to follow the paper more closely.

Several of these articles will strike alert readers as exercises in postmodernist satire. One feature describes how Buddhist monks tell Catholic monks how to practice celibacy; another piece tells about Indonesian schoolchildren asking visitor George W. Bush to change his foreign policy in regard to Islam. (Indonesia? Isn't that one of the places where Muslims keep murdering Christians?) We will find yet another report on the ecumenical failures between Anglicans and Catholics. (Surely, this issue is moribund; by the time full communion is restored, there won't be enough Episcopalians left in America to get up a good game of shuffleboard.) We learn that Massachusetts bishops are "disturbed" by a legislative vote on same-sex marriage. (Members of the press, both secular and Catholic, increasingly describe bishops as "disturbed." What exactly is a disturbed bishop? How does one identify a pothered prelate? Does the usage of *disturbed* possibly refer to some deeper, darker psychological state?)

Any of these articles merits review by an editor with the gimlet eye of an old-fashioned mother superior. Aware of your busy schedule, however, I offer only two of these pieces for examination. The first bears the headline "Revisiting Yesterday's School: St. Joseph's Celebrates 50 Years of Catholic Education." The article reports that the Sisters of Saint Joseph started the school and that 11,000 students have passed through its doors in the last half-century. (Since only one nun remains in the school, and only five in the entire system, these numbers make me wonder how many graduates of our Catholic schools ever become priests, monks, or nuns.) The writer tells us that "one classroom had been retrofitted to represent a typical classroom of the 1950s. Current students took the opportunity to use slate boards and read books like Davy Crockett." Slate boards? In the 1950's, I attended an impoverished public school in a town of 600 people in Piedmont North Carolina, and we never used handheld slate boards as depicted here. And Davy Crockett? Does the writer mean to imply something old-fashioned in reading about a great frontiersman? He then quotes a retired school official: "Teachers in Catholic schools never work there for the money. It's all about the values. The greatest gifts are the children." If this is true, Your Excellency, let me suggest slashing the salaries in these schools. Such cutbacks, which would apparently leave the teachers unperturbed, should reduce the high price of education, thereby allowing many more gifts in the way of children to swarm the classrooms.

Another reporter writes, as if in triumph, that Catholics differed little from other groups in the November elections. She tells us that Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good and Pax Christi USA pushed a "life does not end at birth" campaign designed to persuade Catholics to vote "on a broader basis than just abortion." In a teleconference sponsored by the Catholic Alliance, the Rev. Jim Wallis of Sojourners stated, in regard to the Pennsylvania senatorial race where both candidates opposed abortion, that "it took abortion and religion off the table." Is that the message the *Herald* meant to send, Your Excellency? Does the Church really support the position, as this article seems to suggest, that it's best if we "neutralize abortion as a litmus test issue"?

Let me make two suggestions regarding the *Catholic Herald.* As you know, parishioners pay involuntarily for this puff-and-fluff. Parishes are billed for subscriptions whether parishioners want them or not. Why not let individual readers decide whether they wish to subscribe? Let each reader who so chooses pay for a subscription.

Being reasonably certain that this boat won't float—the *Herald* would sink quicker than the *Titanic*—let me offer another suggestion. Why not set aside two pages aimed at teaching the Faith? These pages could include explanations of the Mass and the Catechism, guides to a richer interior life, brief forays into Catholic history and traditions. The "Keep-'Em-Dumb-And-Dutiful" crowd might object, but a lot of us might actually find something worth reading.

Wishing us both a harshly penitential Lent,

Your obedient servant,

*Joe Ecclesia*



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*by Scott P. Richert*

# Blue Christmas

The November election results were all about the war, the chattering classes told us; and in this case, there's probably more truth to popular opinion than not. For those of us who have opposed the war in Iraq from the beginning (and even before), this seems a rather strange moment. After all, what really changed between November 2004 and November 2006? Yes, more Americans and Iraqis have died; the scale of individual acts of violence has risen; and we're no closer to leaving Iraq today than we were when President Bush defeated John Kerry. But anyone who had eyes to see and ears to hear knew what was coming two years ago. That Tucker Carlson and Rod Dreher and William F. Buckley, Jr., now concede what we argued all along says more about their lack of connection to reality than it does about our prescience.

Perhaps it's time to revisit the conventional wisdom about the 2004 election. The media, who don't like the idea that Republican manipulation of moral issues may have driven the election results, were quick to jump on Karl Rove's claim (on NBC's *Meet the Press* the Sunday after that election) that moral values did not play a decisive role. Rove argued that voters' attitudes on the war and terrorism were more important, and exit polls gave him solid ground for that claim, since the two were cited as the first and second most important issues. There was only one problem with Rove's analysis, however (and, by extension, with that of the liberal media who ran with it): The exit polls also showed that the overwhelming majority of those who were concerned about the war voted for John Kerry, while a slightly smaller majority of those who were concerned about terrorism voted for President Bush. In other words, the two concerns tended to cancel each other out.

As I pointed out two years ago ("Bleeding Red, Feeling Blue," January 2005), this meant that the initial reaction, before Rove spun the results, was correct: The 2004 election was about moral values. Issues such as homosexual "marriage" and abortion placed high in the exit polls, and the voters concerned about them voted overwhelmingly for President Bush and other Republicans. I also argued, however, that Republican unwillingness to do anything about moral issues except use them for electoral gain would begin to backfire. This time, with the exception of a few scattered referenda (abortion in South Dakota, embryonic stem cells/cloning in Missouri), moral values weren't a primary focus in most states. Even terrorism, the polls show, was less of a concern. So the war took center stage.

Coming in a close second was the state of the economy, and on this, too, the Republicans fared poorly. Democratic candidates who made economic nationalism a theme of their campaigns, such as former Reagan administration Secretary of the Navy James Webb in Virginia, won. That these candidates also opposed the war means that we can't say with certainty what put them over the top; what we can say, however, is that the Rust Belt—traditionally socially and morally conservative, with broader support for the war than any other region except the South but devastated economically in Bush's first term—returned almost completely to the Democratic fold. And from that, we can begin to draw some conclusions about the political lay of the land.

What I wrote two years ago about the Republicans' prospects in future presidential elections is supported by these results. If the party "cannot—or, more correctly, will not—provide the Reagan Democrats in the industrial Midwest with an economic policy to match its moral rhetoric," I argued, "the decline of manufacturing may well accelerate, driving these critical states further into Democratic arms." Looking at the infamous Red and Blue map, the Republicans can't win the White House without winning at least one of the Rust Belt states of Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania. The last state is arguably the only one of that group where a moral issue—abortion—played a major role in determining a Senate race, and there, the pro-life Democrat, Bob Casey, Jr. (son of the late and enormously popular pro-life governor), defeated the nominally more pro-life Republican, Rick Santorum, who had supported pro-abortion Republican Arlen Specter against a strongly pro-life candidate in the 2004 primary. And Casey, like Webb, campaigned on economic nationalism as well.

If the last six years have been the Republican moment—with the control of both houses of Congress, the presidency, and even the Supreme Court—the next two are shaping up as a Democratic one. So far, there's no reason to believe that the leadership of the Democratic Party has drawn any useful lesson from the election results. But individual Democrats, such as Casey and Webb, have a much better idea of what is going on.

On November 15, Webb published a hard-hitting op-ed, "Class Struggle: American workers have a chance to be heard," in, of all places, the *Wall Street Journal*. (Interestingly, Webb doesn't use the phrase "class struggle" in the body of the article.) The reaction from the mainstream right and left was swift and unanimous. *National Review*-type conservatives who had endorsed Allen over the clearly more conservative Webb joined their voices to those of Democrats who had taken heat for endorsing this "misogynist," "racist" "Neo-Confederate," and together they cried: "See? We told you he wasn't a conservative!"

And, in one sense, they were right. Webb's op-ed didn't belong in the *Wall Street Journal*. But, with its invocation of "the national interest," it didn't belong in the pages of the *Nation*, either. Instead, it would have fit comfortably in the pages of *Chronicles*' recent issue on manufacturing, or in a dozen other issues that we've published over the past six years.

"When I graduated from college in the 1960s, the average CEO made 20 times what the average worker made. Today, that CEO makes 400 times as much," wrote Webb. "In the age of globalization and outsourcing, and with a vast underground labor pool from illegal immigration, the average American worker is seeing a different life and a troubling future."



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Webb recites the litany of ills that *Chronicles* readers know all too well: the loss of manufacturing jobs; the massive rise in medical costs; the effects of outsourcing and illegal immigration; the increasing gap between the living standards of the top one-percent of wage-earners and of the average worker.

"[T]he true challenge," Webb argues, "is for everyone to understand that the current economic divisions in society are harmful to our future." He is concerned about the possibility of "political unrest" if American workers begin to "understand that there are (and were) clear alternatives to the policies that have dislocated careers and altered futures."

As I argued last month, using the history of manufacturing in Rockford as a model, we need to break out of the dominant view—shared by rich and poor, owners and workers alike—that sees "economic laws" as akin to natural ones. The worker who convinces himself that he cannot afford not to shop at Wal-Mart, even though he realizes that doing so may affect his local economy enough to cost him his own job, has more in common than he may think with the CEO of a multinational corporation who convinces himself that stock price is the only true indicator of the health of his company and, therefore, is willing to slash jobs or send them overseas to increase the bottom line on the next quarterly profit-and-loss statement. That one class of people disproportionally benefits from our economic delusion doesn't change the fact that the delusion is truly national.

Once we acknowledge that wage rates aren't set by the law of gravity, we can begin to see alternatives. After hearing the speech on which I based last month's column, Rockford Institute board chairman David Hartman told me that he attributes the success of the many businesses he has started over his lifetime in part to his commitment to paying his workers a wage on which they could raise a family. In other words, concern for his workers helped his businesses prosper, because he was able to attract the best, brightest, and most hard-working people in the field. Of course, his companies were privately held, so his focus was more on the long term. But that is precisely the point.

"The politics of the Karl Rove era," Webb wrote, "were designed to distract and divide the very people who would ordinarily be rebelling against the deterioration of their way of life." Interestingly, Webb makes the same assumption I did two years ago: American workers hold conservative views on "God, guns, gays, abortion and the flag." That explains the temporary political success of Rove's strategy, but it also points the way to a possible revival of the Reagan coalition—this time, by either party.

In the short term, the Democrats, by virtue of the political success of Casey and Webb, have the upper hand. Since the national party is committed to stances on moral issues that don't play here in Rockford or Macomb County, Michigan, however, they will likely squander that opportunity by the time of the 2008 presidential election. And then the ball will be back in the Republicans' court.

In the long term, however, the Democrats' failure to seize the day may be less important than the Republicans' failure to do so. As I wrote in January 2005, "the very public and visible economic issues are likely to trump the more private issue of abortion," and other moral issues, such as homosexual "marriage," are likely to be decided by the courts—wrongly—by the time George W. Bush leaves office. If neither party rebuilds an alliance based on moral values and economic realism, the Democrats still win.

And conservative voters lose. ◁


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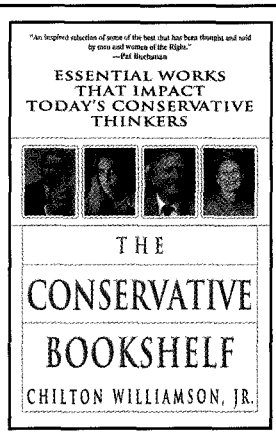


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# Letter From Russia

**by Vladimir Solovey**

## A Wilderness of Mirrors: Litvinenko, Putin, and the West

The death of exiled former FSB (the domestic-security successor to the KGB) officer Aleksandr Litvinenko in London last November momentarily relegated Britney and K-Fed, Oprah, and Madonna to the second pages of Western tabloids. It also sparked a frenzy of speculation about who stands behind the apparent murder—or "murders," since talk of political assassination was already in the air, East and West, following the October shooting of anti-Kremlin journalist Anna Politkovskaya. Add to that the mysterious illness of former (albeit "acting") Premier Yegor Gaydar in Dublin shortly following Litvinenko's death (was it related to Mr. Gaydar's diabetes or a poisoning?), and the fictional antics of Fu Manchu, Dr. No, Blofeld, and Professor Moriarty may not seem as far-fetched as they once did.

Every interested Russian has at least one pet *versiya* explaining the bizarre poisoning of Litvinenko by a radioactive isotope (Polonium 210), and bloggers around the globe have punched out countless words reconstructing Litvinenko's movements on the fateful day, November 1, when he met with two Russians (both former KGB officers) at the Millennium Hotel, and at a popular London sushi bar with Mario Scaramella, a shady Italian "expert" on everything from nuclear energy to Soviet/Russian intelligence operations, who was also contaminated by Polonium 210 (as was Litvinenko's wife, Marina). Scaramella reportedly passed to Litvinenko certain information from Russian sources on the activities of a group of Russian "special services" veterans ("Honor and Dignity") who had compiled a list of "enemies of the people" marked for liquidation—a list that included Politkovskaya, Scaramella, and Litvinenko.

Some days, a professional Kremlinologist has to play the role of amateur homicide detective. There have been a number of such days recently. Let us begin with the "Honor and Dignity" line of investigation. Westerners are largely unaware of two things: First, a number of lists of "enemies of the people" have been floating around on Russian-language websites for months. Since the March 2004 attempted assassination of Anatoli Chubays, who was once in charge of Yeltsin's privatization program and probably the most hated man in Russia, there has been talk of a "patriotic" underground that has been aiming to settle accounts with him—and Politkovskaya, Litvinenko, and Gaydar. Second, organizations such as Honor and Dignity are likely shot through with informers and security agents. Thus, it becomes unclear whether we are talking about a private operation or one that merely has private cover.

The Honor and Dignity *versiya* takes us back full circle to the most simple explanation—and most popular in the West—for the deaths of Politkovskaya and Litvinenko: Elements in the Russian security services, with or without Putin's sanction, are punishing "enemies of the people" and seeking to intimidate critics of the regime. Litvinenko was a relentless critic of Putin and the FSB and had written books on alleged FSB involvement in the 1999 terrorist bombings of Russian apartment buildings, as well as various criminal activities.

This *versiya* only scratches the surface of possible explanations, however. Here are some others (and this is hardly an exhaustive list): Litvinenko was engaged in a shady business deal with Russian contacts involving smuggling radioactive materials—or maybe it involved the international weapons trade, or perhaps Litvinenko was offering up *kompromat* that could be used to blackmail Russian luminaries, including Putin himself. One variation on the smuggling story has Litvinenko, who supposedly converted to Islam on his deathbed, delivering nuclear material to Islamic terrorists. Whatever the details, the shady deal went bad, so his contacts killed him. Such activity is certainly not unheard of in Russian circles, though the method seems a bit complicated. (Why not just push Litvinenko under a bus or use a much simpler and less volatile poison?)

Was Litvinenko killed in a sort of sting operation because of the *kompromat* he may have had? According to information in the British press and from "fallen" Yukos Oil Company "oligarch" Leonid Nevzlin, Litvinenko had information on a Kremlin plan to intimidate former Yukos executives and force them to repatriate huge sums of money to Russia. (Former Yukos boss Mikhail Khodorkovskiy is currently serving time in a Russian prison; the charges against him and his company were widely seen by Russians as part of a plan by Kremlin-connected oil barons to take over Yukos.)

There have been at least two other possible assassinations connected to the Yukos affair, and Kremlin-connected oil companies are now aiming to seize control of the remaining Yukos assets. One of the possible victims in the Yukos affair was Roman Tsepov, a former Putin bodyguard who had reportedly attempted to act as a mediator between Yukos and the Kremlin, while demanding a generous cut of the loot for himself. In 2004, Tsepov died of a mysterious ailment some claimed to have been radiation poisoning. Then there was Stephen Curtis, the British managing director of a company that had been the chief Yukos shareholder. Curtis was also killed in 2004, in a helicopter crash. He was said to have been in charge of funneling Yukos money to "offshore zones" and had told British police he had received death threats.

There is also a "Chechen trail" to follow. Litvinenko was a close associate of "fugitive oligarch" and fierce Kremlin critic Boris Abramovich Berezovskiy (aka "BAB"). BAB, who lives in London, where there is a substantial Russian colony, is linked in turn to the camp of the late Chechen insurgent leader Aslan Maskhadov. Litvinenko frequently posted items on Chechen websites, and his death was mourned in certain Chechen circles, though not in all—specifically not in that of pro-Moscow warlord Ramzan Kadyrov. Maybe Ramzan did it, though poisoning is hardly his style.

Another angle: Berezovskiy himself, or in league with the Yukos exiles, killed his friend to damage Putin's image in the West—and possibly to enlist Western governments in a plan to foment a Russian version of the "Orange Revolution." This scenario was bolstered somewhat by reports that Litvinenko had supposedly fallen out with Berezovskiy. Litvinen-



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ko had also reportedly been warned that his association with Berezovskiy was putting his life in danger. (Was Litvinenko in danger because he was BAB's friend or because he was no longer BAB's friend?) Interestingly, one of the Russians Litvinenko met with on November 1, Andrey Lugovoy, is also a former bodyguard for both BAB and Mr. Gaydar.

Finally, there is another story that also involves an attempt to implicate Putin in the death of Litvinenko so as to damage Putin's relations with the West. In this case, the plotters are not in the camp of Putin's enemies but among members of his own circle.

Sources in the Kremlin administration paint a picture of Vladimir Putin that does not quite conform to that usually painted in either Russian or Western media. For instance, Putin is hardly the hard-working, ambitious, all-knowing, "hands on" Supreme Leader he is portrayed as, despite his reputation as a man with "German" work habits. (Putin speaks German, did his KGB service in East Germany, and is quite the Germanophile.) He sleeps late and frequently spends at least an hour and a half swimming, then rides his horses before leaving his *dacha*, arriving at the Kremlin around noon. The Kremlin staff is fractured, torn by various "clan" conflicts, and its work is marked by laziness and general sloppiness—a tone set by Putin himself. Putin is a quick study, though, and has adapted well to the public role he plays as Kremlin boss. He prefers a quick briefing paper to lengthy study and can recite details from memory. Putin has also spoken (sometimes publicly) about his distaste for politics and has intimated that he was reluctant to become president. Everybody wants something from him; whom can he trust?

And how did Putin become Yeltsin's successor? Vladimir Vladimirovich ("VVP") supposedly turned down representatives of Yeltsin's clan at first and had to be approached (pressured?) again, perhaps several times. Since becoming president, he has contemplated leaving office a number of times. The task, so the story goes, was made a little easier by his business partnership with the "Yeltsin family cashier," billionaire Roman Abramovich, who, like so many of his colleagues, spends most of his time in London these days. Putin longs to live Abramovich's life, and such will be his payoff when the time comes, for he has amassed a considerable fortune of his own. As 2008 and the end of his time as president approaches, he dodges making difficult decisions, has become more indecisive, and is unable to control the warring factions around him. He tells members of his entourage whatever they wish to hear, endorsing first one candidate as his successor, then promising support to another.

According to Russian sources, there are certain members of his entourage, particularly the shadowy deputy head of the Kremlin administration, Igor Sechin, and his allies, who may not want Putin to leave. Things are dangerous in Russia during a change of power. Who knows what a Putin successor might do once VVP is safely out of office, spending his money, establishing residences in, say, London and Germany, where he has many Western friends? Whatever VVP or an anointed successor may guarantee now regarding the safety and security of his allies and their property may not amount to much later. Just ask BAB about that. And these same people, many of whom took part in the dismemberment of Yukos and the case that sent Khodorkovskiy to prison, are now concerned that other factions who favor closer ties to the West might offer up members of Putin's "special services" entourage as a sacrifice, setting Khodorkovskiy free and seizing their property in the bargain. This will satisfy the "human-rights defenders" in the West and maybe soften them up, opening opportunities for the expansion of Russian businesses in Europe and the United States.

Thus, another *versiya* of the deaths of both Litvinenko and Politkovskaya was born. Some of the "special services" veterans and others in the FSB and additional "power structures" might carry out high-profile political assassinations to cut off Putin's Western escape route. It is perhaps no coincidence that Putin was abroad when Politkovskaya was killed (on Putin's birthday, October 8, no less) and when Litvinenko finally succumbed to radiation poisoning. Putin faced a largely hostile Western press and was clearly irritated, disturbed, and angered by the barrage of questions he faced regarding both incidents. It is clear that Russia's image has been severely damaged by the deaths of both Politkovskaya and Litvinenko.

Back in Moscow, Putin's advisors are


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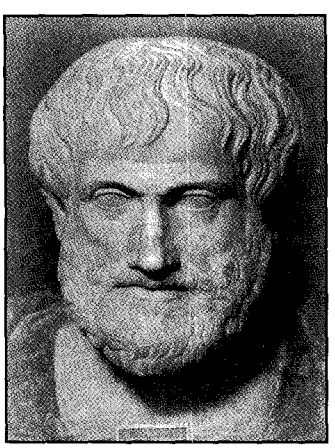
reportedly telling him that the CIA, BAB, Yukos remnants, and other enemies are behind the killings. In this story, the aim is to anger Putin further, turn him against the West, and direct him toward the places where Sechin and friends have business partners: China, India, Iran, and Venezuela, for example. The point being, of course, that Russia does not need the West: She can sell her oil and gas to the Chinese and Indians, and she can earn billions building nuclear facilities in Iran and selling weapons to Venezuela. And so, if this story is to be believed, Putin will take defensive steps that drive a wedge between him and the West, isolating Russia and raising the same questions for Putin that Sechin and company have been asking: How can one be certain that the future is secure? What if the successor—perhaps First Vice Premier Dmitri Medvedev; perhaps Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov; maybe someone else—decides to play his own game? And there is no consensus about a successor, with the entourage divided and the infighting increasingly chaotic. Perhaps the best way for Putin to secure his immediate future is to change the constitution and remain president after 2008, buying time to find a long-term solution to his security problem.

And here is a *versiya* with a twist: Those backing Medvedev as successor might be behind Litvinenko's and Politkovskaya's deaths—or, at least, they might be trying to take advantage of them, telling Putin that Sechin did the killings and should be fired.

I endorse none of these versions, though I tend to believe that Putin would not want to spoil relations with the West and did not order Litvinenko's or Politkovskaya's deaths. I am inclined to think that he is being set up. Both his enemies and some of his "friends" have reason to play such a game. But we must keep a few things in mind: Russia is ruled by the heart, not by the head. Emotions, passions, personal attachments—not logic or reason—are the things that drive events. This can be a good thing, and it can be a bad thing. (I suppose that one could say that this is true of all mankind to one degree or another, and I would not disagree with that.) As a colleague put it to me once upon a time, Russians do not believe in evidence. Every conspiracy theory will have its supporters, and no typical Russian will believe that these are all separate incidents with their own causes. Russians also, perhaps partly because of hard experience, do not believe in coincidence. And if there is one thing I have learned from life, it is that people regularly do things that are apparently against their own interests.

Nothing is quite what it seems in Russia, especially in Russian politics. Perhaps the *zakazchik*, the person who ordered Politkovskaya's murder, was a different person from the *zakazchik* behind Litvinenko's untimely death. Once such an event has occurred, however, the versions will be spun out, the disinformation manufactured, the story massaged by the various players and their "clans," each with his own agenda. I doubt very much that the players themselves can distinguish fact from fantasy, truth from fiction, or even know who all the other players might be. They live in a wilderness of mirrors and will act and react based on whatever foggy reflection they may discern in whichever mirror they face, further confusing those of us who have the interesting, frustrating, and sometimes depressing task of trying to answer the questions *Who done it?* and *Why?*

*Vladimir Solovey is a professional Kremlinologist and consultant on Russian affairs.*

# The Greek Conservative Mind

## The Greeks invented political philosophy . . . but not out of thin air

The ancient Greeks liberated themselves from the shackles of religion and tradition to pursue a dream of democracy, equality, and human rights. Right?

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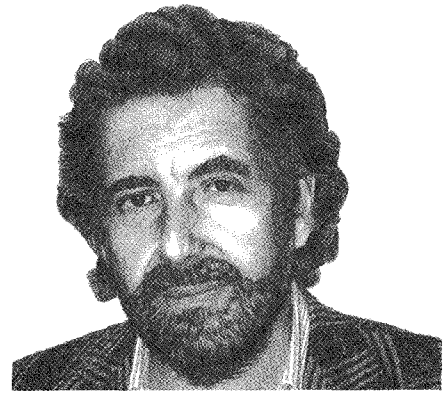
*by Andrei Navrozov*

# The Art of Misanthropy



Photography is a mongrel art, half applied, half found. But then the world we live in is a mongrel world, a hybrid that fuses extant custom and tradition—including, for instance, the constitutional principle of limited government—with the emergent totalitarianism which, as Huxley noted in his Preface to *Brave New World*, would always assume innovative and unrecognizable forms. The bastard is a monster in human guise, and, whenever the mask slips, photography ought to be the right champion for stepping in and letting fly with the magnesium strip. Let Shakespeare's Edmund sort out Goneril's problems. Let Uncle Joe deal with the annexation of Czechoslovakia.

"The things you see when you don't have a gun!" is, not surprisingly, a lighthearted echo of the amateur photographer's motto. I had no gun with me last week when, again, I had to go through the whole airport-security rigmarole on my way back from London; nor plastic explosives secreted in a jar of cold cream, nor cyanide crying out for justice in a tube of Colgate; not even a perfume atomiser, a lipstick, or a hairpin. So the things I saw made my flesh crawl, and when my flesh crawls, I think of my friend Gusov. I urge readers to look at his work on the eponymous site, with three *w*'s before his name and a *.com* after it. He is the Russian photographer who illustrated my *Italian Carousel* some time ago.

For the last few years, since before the tales of Arabian nights were first mooted to scarify the West's infantile electorates into submission—as if global warming and female frigidity were not apocalyptic enough—Gusov has been working on a project entitled *Locusts*. A vast photographic album divided into ten sections, or plagues, it aims to catalogue the mores, to outline the phenomenology, and to capture the state of mind of what he calls the mass man of the common era. Bloated beaches and emaciated restaurants, nightmare industrial towns and famous tourist destinations, Hogarthian maladies and Rabelaisian orgies, Ingsoc London and Midwestern Florence, funerary post offices and Nazi airports—nothing of what one loathes and fears in modern civilization has been left out. He has asked me to contribute an Introduction, and this is how I began thinking about photography, its intellectual claims, and its mixed parentage. Indeed, photography is the only art that has no Muse to its name. If it had, it would probably look like Condoleezza Rice or Hillary Clinton.

So high is my opinion of the Gusov project, and so often do I catch everyday life referring to it in my mind, that I would argue that, until his *Beggar's Opera* came along, photography has been as voiceless as it has been useless. Early attempts to teach the art to speak—such as, memorably, those of Jacques Henri Lartigue—have been superseded, indeed choked, by such a profusion of means and meanings, at once literal-minded and pseudo-intellectual, that the believer in photography, anxious to hear its news, has been left in the embarrassing position of a museum curator who cannot make up his mind whether the sculpture or the crate in which it arrived is of greater value to his collection.

Not one of the technical advances made in photography since Lartigue took his first picture a century ago has added a single word to its putative vocabulary or one new inflection to its meager syntax. Many Japanese tourists, to be sure, have found it easier to be like other Japanese tourists with the help of autofocus; color film may have brought a few American daughters closer to their mothers; war, fashion, and sport have all benefitted from the invention of motor drive. But, unlike the advent of the *Hammerklavier*, proclaimed by Oswald Spengler to have been the birth of modern sensibility, these innovations affected the audience far more than they did the putative speaker. Photography remained mute, getting by on a panhandler's handful of common gestures, and its newly gained catholicity served only to highlight its pitiful plight.

Thus, no sooner was photography engendered by progress—scientific as well as social—than it was undone by it, and undone by it with nary a peep of critical discontent, skepticism, or protest. After all, are not single prints fetching millions at Sotheby's? Are not thousands of photographers feeding their families where once there was just Lartigue? Is not Sunday leisure, in London as in Beijing, quite inconceivable now without the zoom lens? Is not digital transmission of images a boon on a par with the Roman aqueduct? Which is all fairly reminiscent of the boast of Soviet tour guides to foreigners visiting the Tolstoy family estate, to the effect that once upon a time, before the Revolution, a single writer, Count Tolstoy, lived on the estate, while now, on the same estate, there live hundreds of writers.

The bastard art was smothered by progress more quickly than were its noble brethren. Like all revolutions, essentially it devoured itself. Yet, like some of the ideas that occasionally underlie revolutions, some of its aims had been original and legitimate, eminently deserving of continued survival. Gusov's *Locusts*, it seems to me, is as much a denunciation of progress as a rehabilitation of photography. The savagery with which he speaks of one owes everything to the vengeance he wants to wreak upon the killers of the other. As a result, for the first time since Lartigue, the genre begins to make sense.

The notice by the boarding gate said that, while the representatives of the British Airport Authority were there to help, they would not tolerate insulting words, threats of violence, or abusive language. Well, thank God for Gusov, I thought, for his intolerance, for his appetite for revenge, for his abusive new language of the camera. The modern parliament of monsters he is about to put on show—a threepenny opera of conformity, brutality, and vanity that reads like Erasmus on speed—will be an enduring memorial to this pivotal moment in the history of our tinpot democracy. Art or not, photography may yet avenge the artist. ◁



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*by Srdja Trifkovic*

# The Grass Is Not Greener

The outcome of last November's mid-term elections reminded us for the umpteenth time that democracy in America is a corrupt "democratic process" controlled by an elite class that conspires to make secondary issues important and to treat important issues as either irrelevant or illegitimate. One party may be in; another, out; but the regime is in power permanently.

The model was conceived in 1865, came of age in 1933-45, and reached its full maturity in the 1960's. Its upholders in the upper echelons of the Stupid Party are predominantly mendacious, while those atop the Evil Party machine are criminally insane; but all-too-many elected officials and public servants in the United States combine a mix of those qualities that makes them different from one another in degree, not in kind.

The regime presents dozens of secondary issues that are supposed to galvanize us all, from "gay marriage," flag burning, and parental notification to school prayer, amnesty, gun control, and Alaskan wildlife. On Iraq, the parties may differ on the timetable for withdrawal or the role of our allies in the process, but not on the underlying premise that military intervention around the world is a legitimate tool of U.S. foreign policy. The "issues" are discussed *ad nauseam*, but that discussion remains informed by the mandated core concepts: human rights, equality, tolerance, diversity, "free markets," and other supposedly universal values and principles.

Never touching the propositional core, Red and Blue teams go out of their way to conjure up deep and weighty mutual differences that result in *son et lumière* shows every Sunday morning. It is a verifiable law of American politics today that the stridency of political rhetoric escalates in reverse proportion to the substance of issues discussed. The focus on peripheral issues facilitates the ongoing fragmentation of America into an amorphous jumble of special-interest groups devoid of moral restraints and national identity, ignorant of the past and vulnerable to systematic manipulation by the disciples of Gramsci on the "left" and Strauss on the "right."

Thus neutered, straightjacketed, and packaged as "democracy," our "democratic process" is elevated into a secular religion that we are all expected to celebrate. *Democracy*, as President George W. Bush uses the term, is all about elections and competing political parties—both at home and abroad, where "the global democratic revolution" is supposedly taking place under our benevolent guidance. The left approves: As E.J. Dionne noted years ago, "the president embraced much of what liberal human rights advocates have been saying for years." In the same spirit, back in November-December 2000, Al Gore was adamant that his demand for Florida recounts was prompted by the conviction that "every vote must count" and that the wrangling over pregnant chads actually reflected the vitality of "our democracy." Both sides convey the same message to the abstaining majority of Americans: *You really have a lot of power; it's there if you only have the sense to use it; and you have no right to complain if you don't.*

So far, so conventional. Our readers know what the real issues are: identity, culture, faith, family, liberty, biological and civilizational survival. What some of them do not know but may suspect, or hope for, is that the charade of our "democratic process" is somehow unique to America; that, even if most of our fellow citizens are gullible philistines who believe that Saddam was partly responsible for September 11 and that Mr. Bush is a conservative, surely the same does not apply to the old nations of Europe—the suave Italians, or our British cousins, the re-inventors of democracy itself?

A visitor to London or Rome may be surprised to hear a very different story. From the left, the *Daily Mirror* will tell him that America is still dominated by "the self-righteous, gun-totin', military lovin', sister marryin', abortion-hatin', gay-loathin', foreigner-despisin', non-passport ownin' red-necks" who reelected Bush in 2004 and, in doing so, "brought Armageddon that little bit closer and re-christened their beloved nation The Home Of The Knave and the Land Of The Freak." From the right, he will hear the same story in the form of envious comments about the strength of Christianity in America's heartland, the fact that abortion is still an issue (which, in Europe, it is not), and that taking a stand against "gay marriage" in Washington does not amount to political suicide.

In reality, things are bad here, but they are not better anywhere else in what still passes for the civilized world. In some respects, they are worse. While avarice is admittedly less in evidence among Europe's politicians than it is in Washington, their self-destructive ideological zeal is on par with that of Nancy Pelosi, Hillary Clinton, and Edward Kennedy. Three countries in the heart of Old Europe tell only slightly different stories.

Italy is a dying nation. She has the second-lowest birthrate in the European Union, and, short of a last-minute miraculous recovery, her population will shrink by one third by 2050. Some municipalities now offer couples 10,000 euros ($13,000) for each newborn baby—but the main beneficiaries are North African Muslims, whose numbers went from nothing to over one million in a decade. This is an issue *par excellence*, but you wouldn't know that from the debates in parliament or on RAI Uno.

In the week preceding Christmas, that debate was dominated by two parliamentarians belonging to the ruling coalition, Bruno Mellano and Donatella Poretti, who placed four dolls representing homosexual couples near the Baby Jesus in the Nativity scene in parliament in Rome. The two MPs said their gesture was meant to promote the legalization of same-sex marriage and granting legal recognition to unmarried couples. They placed two Kens and two Barbies in horizontal embrace among the shepherds witnessing the birth of Jesus. Each of the couples wore miniature placards with slo-



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gans in favor of special privileges for homosexuals.

While the ensuing prime-time and front-page debate is unworthy of comment, two details come to mind: Even the zaniest among our own representatives are still not "there," as yet; and, even if they were, there is no Nativity scene in the Capitol to adorn. Far from being an encouraging sign of the Italian establishment's concern for tradition, however, Nativity scenes remain because they have been relegated to harmless "heritage." Education Minister Giuseppe Fioroni opposes banning them from schools and public places because, he says, they can be used as "tools for inter-religious dialogue." *I'll show-and-tell my manger to Abdul, he'll show-and-tell his prayer rug to me, and we can celebrate each other in the spirit of tolerant diversity.*

The dolls had completely overshadowed one item of real news: Some 650 illegal North African immigrants, crammed in a fishing boat, reached Sicily on December 19—and were allowed to stay. Yes, the word is out in the Muslim heartland that, since coming to power last May, Romano Prodi's leftist government has further liberalized an already lax immigration system inherited from Silvio Berlusconi. Like Berlusconi, Prodi parrots the lie that foreign workers are needed "to take up jobs that Italians no longer want"; unlike his predecessor, Italy's prime minister believes that the influx is a great and good thing in cultural and moral terms.

Prodi's recent approval of immigrant visas for an additional 350,000 "non-EU residents" (read: African Muslims), and his government's repeated commitment to shorten the time it takes foreign residents to be granted Italian citizenship, will contribute to Italy's ongoing transformation into a country less civilized, less safe, and more violent and foul-smelling than the one many of us have come to know and love. Even as Rome's Piazza del Cinquecento is being turned into Mogadishu, and Venice's San Marco into Benghazi, same-sex Kens and Barbies are presented as "issues" and accepted as such by a pliant public.

In Britain, which I am departing at the time of this writing, the political debate has been dominated for many months by the latent tension between Prime Minister Tony Blair and his chancellor of the exchequer and heir apparent Gordon Brown. When will Blair go? He has said he will stand down before the next general election, without bowing to pressure to specify when. What can Brown do that will speed up his departure while not causing a rift within the Labour Party in the process? Veteran Labour politician Roy Hattersley warns gravely, "I've been in the Labour Party 50 years and it's 40-odd since I was elected to Parliament—I've never known a time when the in-fighting in the Labour Party was so bitter."

Even after reading thousands of column inches in the quality dailies and listening to dozens of pundits on the BBC, however, you would be hard-pressed to decide what exactly is the difference between Blair and Brown. Perhaps Blair is a little more strident on the touchy-feely, therapeutic aspect of his New Labour project, while Brown is less ideological and a little more technocratic, but it is really hard to tell.

Across the Channel, the regime bared its knuckles in the spring of 2002, when President Jacques Chirac—supported by socialists, communists, trots, centrists, and every establishmentarian and his uncle—beat Jean-Marie Le Pen in the second round of the country's presidential election. Ludicrously invoking De Gaulle, Chirac claimed that "a certain idea of France" had triumphed over "fascism." What did triumph was an efficient "democratic process," managed by a few hundred École Normale Supérieure graduates, over a subversive attempt to treat real issues—identity, immigration, nation, loyalty—as not only important but legitimate. Chirac is a windbag who has been around far longer than I care to remember. He was re-elected *faute de mieux*—all *faute* and no *mieux* here—and, after 12 years of his presidency, the problem of France, her identity and her future, remains more acute than ever.

The race this spring will be between Sarkozy and Villepin, a choice as exciting and as significant as that between Blair and Brown. Neither will admit that France is well-nigh Eurabianized already, perhaps irreversibly so. As French commentator Yves Charles Zarka has warned, France is experiencing

> a central phase of the more general and mutually conflicting encounter between the West and Islam, which only someone completely blind or of radical bad faith, or possibly of disconcerting naiveté, could fail to recognize.

Messrs. Chirac, Sarkozy, and Villepin are neither blind nor naive.

An encouraging sign in an otherwise grim picture is that the electorate, on both sides of the Atlantic, is not excited by the "democratic process" on offer. In Britain, Tony Blair keeps telling the people that the act of voting is an heroic gesture with deep moral connotations, but, in 1997, his New Labour was backed by only 31 percent of eligible voters—the lowest turnout since 1945—and the number has not grown since. Among the European Union's 350 million eligible voters, a mere 45 percent went to the polls in the European elections last June. In the United States, midterm turnout remains stubbornly below 40 percent of the electorate.

As one British sociologist has noted, the main difference between today's oligarchs and their predecessors is that Blair, Prodi, Bush, *et al.* are more sensitive to the oligarchy's isolation from the wider public:

> In an era of mass communication and social mobility, the gulf that separates the political class from the electorate is all too apparent. In the past, the elites were supposed to inhabit a different planet from everybody else. But to acknowledge the distance that separates the political class from the people today risks exposing the legitimacy of the system to some uncomfortable questions.

Those questions will become seriously uncomfortable only if the abstainers come to consider some serious alternatives to the choreographed charade offered every two years. We need more liberty and less "democracy"; and when Americans learn to make the essential distinction between them, that knowledge will set them free. ©

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YANKEES

## Memories of Mr. Lytle

**by John Willson**

Almost nobody thinks that Yankees can possibly understand agrarians. But one of the great pleasures in my life is that I was, at least at one time or another, Mel Bradford's favorite Yankee. And because Mel introduced me with great good manners to Mr. Andrew Nelson Lytle, I became one of his favorite Yankees, too.

Mel Bradford came to Hillsdale College in the early fall of 1975, to speak at a seminar we had put together to comment on and honor Russell Kirk's *The Roots of American Order*. Mel was fascinated with the two *l*'s in my family name and questioned me closely about the New England heritage that seemed to him to be written on my forehead. He said to me during our very first meeting, "Did you have any people in the 'late unpleasantness'?" He had several names for the war of 1861-65, but, when he was among friendly Yankees, he always said the "late unpleasantness." I told him that I did, indeed, that three Willson brothers had fought with a New York unit out of Buffalo. "Were they," he said, "at Chickamauga on the third day?" I told him that family history says they were, but I didn't know the details. Mel drew himself up to his full 6 feet 5 inches and 350 pounds, and said with great dignity, "Sir, our families have met before."

He thought that I might appreciate Mr. Lytle, so he arranged for him to come to Hillsdale, to stay a week, and to teach six or seven classes, and to teach several of our good young men how properly to drink bourbon. One of those young men was Gregory Wolfe, who was then my brilliant student and who now is an accomplished editor and author. Mr. Lytle liked what we were trying to do at Hillsdale. Once, he said to me, "I like it that you are all young—but not too young." He later wrote to Greg Wolfe that he found joy and peace living "in a sense of eternity." His vision of the world was profoundly Christian, but, like Russell Kirk's, was rarely found in church. Bishop William Milsapps, a godly Anglican and resident with Mr. Lytle at Monteagle, Tennessee, chided him about needing to be in church and receiving the Sacrament. Mr. Lytle said, "William, yours is the church I do not attend."

Mr. Lytle was taken with the gardens I used to grow. He said, "I hope you do not use chemicals. I like organic vegetables." He really said that. I told him that cabbage worms are a real problem, and that tomato hornworms are hard to combat. He said, "Well, that's why I don't grow cabbage, and that's why I don't grow tomatoes. I grow okra. No bugs like okra."

Many good people have better memories than I have of Mr. Lytle. We gave him an honorary doctorate at Hillsdale (wishing in piety not to let the professional agrarians die unnoticed), and he gave a talk that every American should hear. It was called "The Momentary Man," and, although it has been published in various forms, he introduced it with a story that he had not written down.

I tell it from memory: "A man was caught up in the trials of life. He worked hard, and he had many responsibilities. His wife was unhappy, and his children unruly. He lived in the town of his birth but had secretly always wanted to get away. He stayed because he had to take care of things. His father lived in a local care facility (they had no room for him at home, and his wife would not have appreciated his presence), and the man took him for automobile rides in the country every Sunday afternoon. The man was out of sorts on one of their Sundays, and he looked over at his father who was particularly incoherent and drooling, and he stopped the car. He walked to his father's side and opened the door and yelled at him. 'You stupid worthless old man. You slobbering millstone. You tie me to this terrible place. I hate, hate, hate . . .' He had no more to say, and so went back to his place and slumped down exhausted. His father said, 'Son, who was that man?'"

A room full of us sat stunned. Then, Mr. Lytle went on to tell us about Lilith and his heretical notions about the Bible, and he also mentioned that Thornton Wilder, a Yankee Midwesterner, had written one of the great plays about the Momentary Man, called "The Skin of Our Teeth." Some of us Yankees get things right, sometimes.

*John Willson is Professor of History, Emeritus, at Hillsdale College.*

THE NEW REPUBLIC

## Lincoln's Other War of Aggression

**by Joseph E. Fallon**

Lincoln's war against Southern independence is just one component of the American Civil War. Like a Matryoshka doll, the Civil War opens up to reveal a set of nested wars, one inside another. There is Lincoln's war against international law; his war against the Congress; his war against the judiciary; his war against the Bill of Rights; and, finally, his lesser known war against the Indians of Minnesota in 1862—an event that both demonstrated Lincoln's character and influenced U.S. policy toward the Plains Indians for the rest of the 19th century.

For Lincoln, the American Civil War was the instrument he needed to achieve his two key objectives: consolidating political power in the federal government, particularly in the presidency; and imposing Henry Clay's "American System"—corporate welfarism for Northern special interests, such as the banks, railroads, mining, and manufacturers. This system institutionalized corruption and created what Mark Twain would later derisively call the "Gilded Age."

Lincoln's victims were not just the states, both Southern and Northern, but the Indian nations. His conduct toward the Indians revealed his duplicity. While condemning corrupt practices by traders and agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Lincoln supported the immigration of thousands of settlers onto Indian lands and refused to honor existing treaties.

He specifically refused to pay the Santee Sioux of Minnesota the $1.5 million owed them by the U.S. government according to the terms of two major 1851 treaties (Traverse des Sioux and Mendota) and three additional 1858 treaties involving the sale of 24 million acres of land,



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including most of the state of Minnesota, to the U.S. government. Instead, Lincoln sought new treaties to dispossess Indian nations of additional lands as quickly and as cheaply as possible.

In 1862, after a crop failure, famine broke out among the Indians of Minnesota. The conduct of the U.S. government turned a natural disaster into man-made tragedy. Local authorities refused to supply the starving Indians with the food stockpiled for them in accordance with the terms of the treaties. One Minnesota trading-post operator summed up the government's response: "If they're hungry, let them eat grass or their own dung."

The Sioux, Cheyenne, and Chippewa responded violently, fomenting the Great Sioux Uprising of 1862, in which over 800 white men, women, and children were massacred. The war ended with Lincoln ordering the public hanging of 38 Indians in the largest mass execution in U.S. history.

The execution is presented by Lincoln apologists as an act of clemency, since, of the 2,000 Indians captured, 303 had been sentenced to death. However, each of the 303 had been denied a substantial hearing. On average, their trials before a military court lasted just ten minutes each.

Political expediency, not compassion, dissuaded Lincoln from having all the condemned hanged. He feared a mass execution would inflame public opinion in Europe and provide a pretext for the British and French governments to recognize the Confederacy. At the same time, Lincoln had to satisfy the Minnesotans' demand for justice if he was to maintain their support for his war against the South. So he crafted a compromise: Lincoln had only 38 Indians hanged but would later expel the rest of the Indians from the state. As part of that understanding, more than 300 Indians were immediately imprisoned for three years in Davenport, Iowa, where over one third of them died. Their families were incarcerated at Fort Snelling.

Volumes V, VI, and VII of *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, edited by Roy P. Basler (Rutgers University Press), contain official correspondence on the 1862 Indian uprising in Minnesota and reveal Lincoln as corrupt and cowardly.

After the military verdicts were handed down, Lincoln sent a letter to Gen. John Pope, the judge advocate general, on November 10, 1862, in which he reveals his hesitancy to accept personal responsibility for the mass execution his staged trials had ordained:

> Your despatch giving the names of three hundred Indians condemned to death, is received. Please forward, as soon as possible, the full and complete record of these convictions. And if the record does not fully indicate the more guilty and influential, of the culprits, please have a careful statement made on these points and forwarded to me. Send all by mail.

Gov. Alexander Ramsey telegraphed Lincoln on November 10, addressing Lincoln's hesitancy: "I hope the execution of every Sioux Indian condemned by the military court will be at once ordered. It would be wrong upon principle and policy to refuse this." On November 11, Lincoln endorsed Ramsey's telegraph, "Respectfully referred to Secretary of War."

On December 1, 1862, Lincoln wrote Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt:

> Three hundred Indians have been sentenced to death in Minnesota by a Military Commission and execution only awaits my action. I


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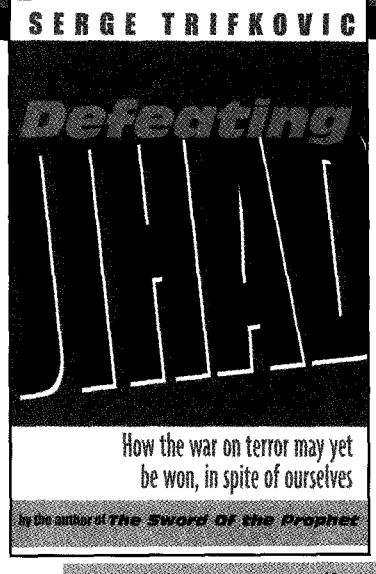


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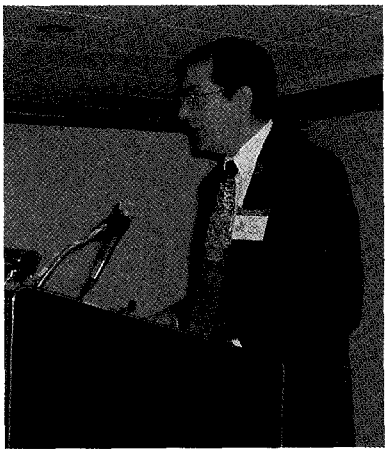

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wish your legal opinion whether if I should conclude to execute only a part of them, I must, myself designate which, or could I leave the designation to some officer on the ground?

Replying the same day, Holt wrote:

> I do not understand the precise form in which the question, referred to in your note of this morning, presents itself. If it be on an application to pardon the indians [*sic*] condemned, or a part of them, I am quite sure that the power cannot be delegated . . . The delegation of those upon whom the sentence is to be executed, is but the exercise of the same power . . . I am not aware of any instance in which the delegation of this delicate and responsible trust, has been attempted.

Then, on December 6, Lincoln wrote Gen. Henry H. Sibley:

> Ordered that of the Indians and Half-breeds sentenced to be hanged by the Military Commission . . . lately sitting in Minnesota, you cause to be executed on Friday the nineteenth day of December, instant, the following named, to wit [A list of thirty-eight names follows]. The other condemned prisoners you will hold subject to further orders, taking care that they neither escape, nor are subjected to any unlawful violence.

In a follow-up to General Sibley, Lincoln agreed to a slight alteration: "As you suggest, let the executions fixed for Friday, the nineteenth (19th) instant, be postponed to, and be done on, Friday, the twenty-sixth (26th) instant."

On December 27, Sibley reported to the President in a telegraph that "the 38 Indians and half-breeds ordered by you for execution were hung yesterday at Mankato, at 10 a.m. Everything went off quietly, and the other prisoners are well secured."

Months later, Lincoln executed congressional legislation to seize more Indian lands and begin the removal of Indians from Minnesota. The rest of the Sioux were expelled and exiled to Crow Creek, South Dakota, and the Santee reservation in Nebraska. In his Annual Message to Congress a year later (December 8, 1863), Lincoln boasted that

> The measures provided at your last session for the removal of certain Indian tribes have been carried into effect. Sundry treaties have been negotiated which will, in due time, be submitted for the constitutional action of the Senate. They contain stipulations for extinguishing the possessory rights of the Indians to large and valuable tracts of land. It is hoped that the effect of these treaties will result in the establishment of permanent friendly relations with such of these tribes as have been brought into frequent and bloody collision with our outlying settlements and emigrants.

On August 23, 1864, Lincoln made good on his promise and signed an order auctioning off the reservation granted by treaty to the Winnebago:

> In pursuance of law, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do hereby declare and make known that public sales will be held . . . [a]t the Land Office at St. Peter [Minnesota] . . . for the dispersal of the Public lands comprised in the late reserve for the Winnebago Indians.

Before 1862, relations between the Indians in Minnesota and the settlers—the French, then the British, and later, the Americans—had been relatively peaceful. Lincoln terminated that state of affairs. His refusal to honor treaties fostered racial animosities and provoked the Great Sioux Uprising.

In the end, Lincoln emerged victorious from his war of aggression against the Indians of Minnesota. It appeared this conflict, which lasted from August 17 to September 26, would become nothing more than a footnote in the history of the American Civil War. As one French writer observed, however, "live long enough and every victory turns into a defeat."

The "peace" Lincoln imposed on the Indians of Minnesota soon ignited the Plains Indian Wars, which ultimately engulfed the western half of the United States, stretching from Canada to the Mexican border. It would be a brutal, needless war, bringing death, destruction, and defeat to both sides, from Little Bighorn to Wounded Knee. And it would last not for 6 weeks, but for another 30 years.

*Joseph E. Fallon writes from Rye, New York.*

Nicholas Garrie



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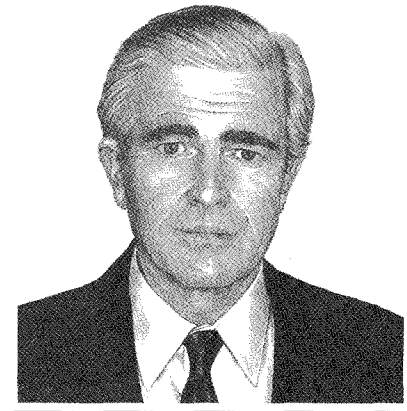
*by George McCartney*

# Blood Offerings



***Casino Royale***

*Produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*
*Directed by Martin Campbell*
*Screenplay by Neal Purvis, Robert Wade, and Paul Haggis*
*Distributed by Sony Pictures Entertainment*

***Apocalypto***

*Produced by Icon Productions and Touchstone*
*Directed by Mel Gibson*
*Screenplay by Mel Gibson and Farhad Safinia*
*Distributed by Buena Vista Pictures*

Unlike the earlier techno-laden James Bond films, *Casino Royale* has nothing much in the way of gadgets except its new lead, Daniel Craig. But what an ingeniously sophisticated gizmo he is! This 007 is blond, blue-eyed, impressively athletic, and blessedly low-tech. Wait, I forgot to mention the defibrillator in the glove compartment of his Aston Martin. But, hey, who doesn't travel with one nowadays?

Despite this Bond's conspicuous lack of gadgetry, one thing stays true: his *modus misoperandi*. He is still a secret agent so improbably reckless that his identity is about as incognito as yesterday's headlines. His notorious notoriety has always made him charmingly vulnerable to shooting, stabbing, and being thrown from high places. In *Casino*, he's macheted and nail-gunned to boot. However, there is this difference, and it is the defining mark of the new Bond. He bleeds—bleeds and bruises and scars. He even vomits. I cannot recall his forerunners sustaining anything much worse than mussed hair after being tossed from a plane or grenaded in a tub. *Casino*, on the other hand, decorates Craig with an inexhaustible supply of red badges, each denoting his extreme, not to say insane, courage. In one scene, he emerges from a luxe Bahamian hotel, his face raked red from crown to chin as a result of his exertions the night before. No, not with an overenthusiastic trollop; for reasons too predictable to go into, he had been dangling upside down from a speeding airport fuel truck, and the tarmac got in the way.

Wow, you think. Realism. This Bond suffers consequences. Of course, he heals rather more quickly than your average mortal. His recuperative powers allow him to show up in Montenegro a couple of evenings later for a bout of multimillion-pound poker, taking his seat in the Salle Prive, his fresh face remarkably unscraped. No close-shave jokes at Mr. Bond's expense, thank you.

Then there is the torture. The last movie I saw in which a torturer used a man's testicles as the preferred route to his secrets was Fritz Lang's *M* (1931). It was done in long shot, as I recall, for about 15 seconds. In *Casino*, Bond is stripped and given similar encouragement for what seems like 15 minutes. While the site of said encouragement remains just out of camera range, Craig twists his face in agony and screams like a banshee. In the multiplex where I saw this happen, the usually talkative audience went dead silent except for a faint rustling of trousered knees. And there was more pain to come—not only physical but emotional. This certainly isn't the Bond we have come to laugh with in earlier times. Was he, I wondered, doing penance for his many, many sins?

The film's pain and bloodletting derives directly from its source. When *Casino Royale* was published in 1953, few could have predicted that Ian Fleming was about to spawn a worldwide multibillion-dollar franchise in books, films, and comic strips, nor that he would make the world's second-oldest profession seem glamorous. The narrative hasn't the popular touch. Nearly 30 of its 187 pages are taken up with a game of baccarat, described card by card. Another 46 are devoted to Bond undergoing testicular torture and recovering painfully. So, for 40 percent of the novel, Bond is either sitting at a card table or passively receiving beatings, followed by medical care. Make further room for the necessary introduction of a new character, and there's not much left for what Bond's film fans have come to expect in the way of battering enemies and bedding lovelies. What the book does do, however, is establish Fleming's weird mix of chivalry and sadomasochism, a concoction that would persist through the following 12 volumes.

Bond's reputation as a heartless womanizer derives more from the films than from the novels. On the page, Bond's amours may not be morally punctilious, but they are nevertheless marked by a chivalrous concern for what was once thought the weaker sex. He is forever protecting women, not infrequently offering them marriage. For a supposedly hard-bitten son of a bitch, he's all too easily smitten.

In many of the stories, his need to save women impels him to make mistakes that drop him into the hands of his enemies who then abuse him hideously, not infrequently attacking his genitals, following the *Casino* template. In *Goldfinger*, a laser beam comes close to slicing him in half from his crotch up. In *You Only Live Twice*, his archenemy, Ernst Blofeld, strips him naked and sits him on the mouth of a volcanic fumarole scheduled to erupt within minutes. Was Fleming working out some psychodynamic whereby male arrogance had to be chastened before being deemed suitable for female acceptance? I'll leave this mystery to the psychiatrists. One thing seems clear: The pain is part of the pattern of these novels. Bond is nothing if not a man of feeling.

Fleming always pits a villain of cold, reptilian intelligence against the willful, emotional, and very human Bond. Le Chiffre, the miscreant in *Casino*, sets the precedent. Left displaced and rootless after World War II, he has assumed a name that announces what he is. *Chiffre* is French for "number" or "cipher." As a verb, it means "calculate." Nothing could be more accurate. Chiffre is more



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computer than man. Even when he loses 14 million francs at cards, he "show[s] no trace of emotion" but "continue[s] to play like an automaton." In the film, he looks up from his cards to intimidate an opponent. "You have a 17.4 percent chance of drawing a straight," he murmurs with soft menace. Bond, on the other hand, plays by instinct, relying on his ability to read people's emotions to decide whether to fold or bluff.

The point is simple. Bond is meant to be the alternative to everything men like Le Chiffre stand for. The villains in these stories are what George Orwell called the "streamlined men." They are peculiarly modern in their devotion to managerial organization achieved by a nerveless exercise of power aided by technology. Furthermore, they lack any passion other than the desire to control others. In *You Only Live Twice*, Blofeld reveals that he suffers from accidie, an inability to feel. "There has developed in me a certain mental lameness," he confesses, "a disinterest in humanity and its future, an utter boredom with the affairs of mankind." Emotionally numb to life's other possibilities, these characters cultivate a monstrous need to control all they survey. It's their way of taking revenge on those who exhibit a vital appetite for life's pleasures. Bond, then, is their natural enemy, a man at once alive in all his senses and vulnerable to all his passions.

Director Martin Campbell understands this, and Craig makes it stick. In his scenes with Vesper Lynd (Eva Green), Craig makes us know how susceptible he is, not to lust merely, but to the entire spectrum of feminine charm. Lynd is the accountant MI 6 sends to accompany him on his mission. She oversees the 10- to 15-million pounds he's been fronted to destroy Le Chiffre's terrorist underwriting by wiping out his funds at the card table. Understandably miffed at her trespass on his autonomy, Bond is nevertheless taken with Vesper's beauty. When he discovers she's also smart as well as provokingly not complaisant, Craig's gaze registers something more than desire. In the best repartee ever mustered in a Bond film, Vesper elegantly puts Bond in his place over dinner and then asks with assumed innocence, "How was your lamb?" Craig replies, "Skewered; one sympathizes," smiling both at her and his own bedazzlement. It's an unprecedented moment of tenderness in a series infamous for the crudity of its romantic *pas de deux*.

The film ends with an indication that the series will return to vulgar type in the next feature, which would be unfortunate. It's past time we had a human Bond.

Speaking of blood, it pours by the kiloliter in Mel Gibson's *Apocalypto*, perhaps the best savage chase movie since Cornel Wilde's *Naked Prey* (1965). There is no need to get involved with the notorious Gibson controversy here. (Does he hate Jews? Do they hate him? Who cares?) Whatever the truth, *Apocalypto* remains a considerable achievement. It is not a great film. It doesn't rank with Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, but it has the distinction of being a daring, at times reckless, movie. Who but Mad Mel would have undertaken to dramatize 16th-century backforest Mayan tribesmen played by American, Canadian, Mexican, and Central American Indians speaking Yucatec with subtitles to help the untutored?

The performers, mostly nonprofessionals, almost look and act their parts. I say almost, because they are too clearly products of our time. Their movements and reactions speak of people who have spoken on telephones; watched film and television; seen themselves in mirrors, in photographs, and on video, if not film. Such experiences change consciousness. They make us self-aware to a degree impossible for a true primitive. This is why genuine primitives do not have nearly the expressive facial range of self-regarding moderns. Furthermore, their intensely communal life does not promote the kind of individual, focused attention we take as natural.

All this noted, the film must be granted its fictional license. It contains extraordinarily beautiful and exciting passages. It is also quite harrowing. The story concerns a simple tribe whose way of life is totally destroyed by their brutal big-city cousins in a single morning. After a few scenes establishing the peaceful life of these rainforest dwellers, a raiding party descends upon them, mercilessly killing children and the elderly and raping the women. They then round up the remaining able-bodied and march them off—the women to be sold into slavery, the men to be offered up to the sun god. One of the tribe, Jaguar Paw (Rudy Youngblood, a riveting performer of Comanche and African ancestry who will doubtless return to the screen), however, manages to secret his wife and little boy down a deep hole. Upon reaching the Mayan city, he and his comrades are marched to the top of a pyramid where a high priest is sacrificing a seemingly endless supply of men, plunging his knife into their chests and pulling out their still-beating hearts. He then decapitates them and bounces their heads down the pyramid's stone steps. All this is depicted in graphic, blood-soaked detail. We even get to see the astonished victims reacting to what is happening to them while the smiling priest holds their throbbing hearts aloft in honor of the gods.

Jaguar manages to escape this fate at the last possible moment. He takes off for his village chased by the raiding warriors. His flight is fiercely and wondrously heroic, as is his one goal, to save his wife and son.

Gibson has gone on record saying that his imagined Mayan civilization has parallels with ours. Its leaders use fear to control their people. They sacrifice the young to keep themselves in power. We are even to believe that, like us, they have been polluting their environment. A little girl shows up bearing the sores of some disease and prophesies the coming of a jaguar man who will blot out the sun. A monstrous tree falls in an already decimated forest, apparently from rot caused by the Maya. This seems to me a showman's bunkum. How would the Maya have destroyed their natural environment? With emissions from their travois and canoes?

Nearly as improbable, Spanish conquistadores show up at one egregiously *deus-ex-machina* point. Some reviewers have sneered that this is Gibson's way of suggesting that Europeans were to be saviors to the Mayan little guys. Nothing of the sort. The Spanish galleons off the Yucatan coast are clearly meant to be harbingers of yet another catastrophe. If Gibson has an apocalyptic point to make, it's this: Man has always been given to fear, cruelty, and abuse. And we have always yearned for salvation from the world's terrors, desperately trying to placate the gods for our transgressions. This is why Gibson made the *Passion*, in which he dramatized the one truly selfless and effective Sacrifice, all others—savage or civilized, bloody or bloodless—being merely shadows of the Real Thing.

But put aside the deep-dish analysis. *Apocalypto* is an amazing adventure story, and that is quite enough. ◁©



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*by Chilton Williamson, Jr.*

# Mother and Daughter

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Villa slept much that night from worry over Contracepción and her love interest. From time to time, one or the other would drift off—AveMaría into nightmares of a Muslim wedding, Héctor to dream of thrashing the lusty young Islamist within an inch of his life. But they would soon wake and lie side by side in the darkness, discussing in hushed tones the necessary measures to be taken before AveMaría delivered Contracep to work at the mosque the next morning.

Héctor was all for confronting their daughter at breakfast and forbidding her outright to see the fellow again. His wife favored collecting Contracep herself after work on pretence of driving her to the Los Lunas mall to shop for new shoes and postponing the unpleasantness until after supper in the presence of Bro. Billy Joe, who was expected to drop by for dessert and coffee. Héctor, who considered AveMaría's plan a classic example of weak-minded female indirection, held his tongue anyway. If only his children were reversed in age and it were Dubya he had to deal with tomorrow! For some reason he didn't understand but which had nothing to do with cowardice (he assured himself), Héctor felt he'd rather face a firing squad than have to lay down the law to his daughter on an issue of romance. And, was she really his daughter anymore? A great part of his anguish, Héctor realized, derived from the fear that he wasn't going to recognize Contracepción when, for the first time since learning the news from Jesús "Eddie," he laid eyes on her at 7 A.M. across the breakfast table.

In fact, he avoided her gaze over breakfast, ate almost nothing, and excused himself from the table after ten minutes, saying he had an early appointment in Mountainair, 45 miles away. When AveMaría gave him a significant look, Héctor couldn't help feeling like a coward in spite of himself. The sense of having ignominiously abandoned his post stayed with him as far as Blue Canyon, where he stopped at the roadside café for several more cups of coffee and a sweet roll, so as not to have to wait in his truck for forty minutes outside the client's place of business. Thank God—Héctor reflected fervently—he had but one daughter to give to his country!

When her husband had departed for Mountainair, AveMaría called Bro. Billy Joe on the bedroom phone to inform him of the current crisis *chez Villa* and enlist his help that evening. Then it was time to drive Contracepción to work. The girl complained all the way of being forbidden makeup and jewelry and having to wear a headscarf on the job, and acted offended when her mother failed to offer sympathy. AveMaría had not, in fact, been very surprised to learn that Contracep had a boyfriend, having spotted the telltale signs over the past couple of weeks. But she had been totally unprepared for the news that the boyfriend was an Islamist, a sworn enemy of America and the Lord Jesus. Contracepción had been brought up, at home as well as at Sunday school, to know better. Concerning what might have gone wrong, AveMaría could not have said, anymore than she'd understood why her youngest sister, Angélica, had run off to Ciudad México at the age of fifteen to work as a call girl. Of course, the money was good, but Middle Eastern people didn't have any money, they were all poor, except for the Jews—besides which, they looked exactly alike. How could you fall in love with one of them when you couldn't tell the one you loved from all the rest? Bro. Billy Joe would have said it was the Devil, but AveMaría knew better. It was the way young girls were. After all, she'd been one herself, once. And it was true her father had never considered Héctor much of a prize—though at least he'd been *Méxicano*, not one of those look-alike Islamists with a bomb under his turban. Thinking of bombs frightened AveMaría to the point where, by the time they arrived at the mosque, she was in near panic from imagining it to be a terrorist religious cell like those she'd seen American troops smashing their way through in Iraq on the evening news.

The place appeared peaceable enough, and AveMaría managed to regain sufficient control of herself to say, in a more or less normal voice, "I'll pick you up myself this afternoon, *¡vida mía!* We'll run up to the mall in Los Lunas and buy you the shoes you've been wanting since Día del Muerte!"

In that instant, the daughter's expression told her mother all that she needed to know. For the rest, there was the glimpse she had of a young man peering furtively around a corner of the mosque toward the car, a Moorish Adonis with a black beard and black curly hair—absolutely the handsomest boy, AveMaría caught herself thinking, she had ever laid eyes on.

"*¡O Mamá!*" Contracepción wailed, "I don't need those dumb sandals! Honest, I don't! And the mall is always so crowded on Friday afternoons!"

AveMaría did not know what to say. If she were in her daughter's shoes, she wouldn't want to visit the mall with her mother this afternoon, either. Contracep, of course, was a beautiful girl and very well developed for her age, who'd attracted admiring glances from men from the time she was ten or eleven. Even at that, the mother couldn't help being impressed. She herself had never attracted a boy like this one when she was thirteen—or ever. The kid looked to be just the right age for Contracep, plus he was hot! Anyone could see that, AveMaría thought, just by looking at him.

"OK," she agreed, "we'll look for shoes some other time. Only, I want you back by five o'clock sharp, before your father gets home. Otherwise, he's going to be very angry—and so will I." *Be sure and tell me the first time he kisses you*, she wanted to add, but didn't.

"*¡O Mamá, gracias—muchas, muchas gracias!*" Contracepción jumped from the Subaru and started at a trot toward the corner of the building, from where the gorgeous visage had withdrawn itself. AveMaría watched with a kind of fierce indulgence as she went, her headscarf fluttering on a stiff desert wind. It was the fastest, she thought, she'd ever seen her daughter move. (Contracep, far from be-



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ing an athletic girl, was rather lazy.)

AveMaría's first thought on reaching home was to telephone her best friend, Teresa Aguilar, who had a daughter the same age as Contracepción, and give her the news that Contracep had found herself a hunk of fifteen or sixteen. In the end, she decided against doing so, as Teresa was not only a Catholic but an actual practicing one, who could be counted on to disapprove of a Christian girl dating an Islamist, no matter how great-looking. AveMaría had just reached this decision when Bro. Billy Joe called to postpone dinner with the Villas until the following evening, owing to the suicide that morning of a member's son who'd left behind a note explaining that his father had refused him the sports car he'd wanted for a graduation present. Though AveMaría was relieved at not having to put herself out as a hostess on so eventful a day, the mere thought of the preacher caused her a pang of anxiety, produced by dark foreboding. What, she wondered, would Billy Joe have to say when he learned of Contracepción's conquest? Although she chose not to dwell on the subject for now, AveMaría believed she could make a pretty good guess. Between them, Billy Joe and Héctor would constitute a formidable opposition that was likely to carry the day against herself and Contracep. What words would get said on the way to a decision scarcely bore contemplation, she found. Why couldn't the preacher and her husband understand that this boy was just exactly what the girl needed to bolster her self-confidence and help her find the way to maturity? Every talk-show host and advice columnist she knew of would agree with her, rejecting the ignorant and unfeeling viewpoint of the two privileged men who shared between them the power to determine poor Contracepción's fate.

Her worst fear, that the young man would delay in delivering Contracep to the house until after her now-watchful father had reached home, proved unfounded. Instead, with faultless oriental tact and prudence, he dropped her off a block away and just on the stroke of five o'clock, a good half-hour before Héctor's van pulled up to the curb.

"Where's Contracepción?" Héctor demanded first thing of his wife, even before he'd gotten a beer from the fridge.

"In her room, studying her Sunday-school lesson," AveMaría informed him. "And Brother Billy Joe called this afternoon to say he can't make it tonight. He's coming tomorrow instead."

"*¡Bueno!* I want to know what a preacher makes of this mess, but I'm too exhausted to discuss it with him this evening. And since Billy Joe won't be here, after all, I can drink beer with dinner—*¡gracias a Dios!*"

When Contracepción took her place at the dinner table that evening, her father regarded her furtively with eyes from which the scales had fallen at last. How, Héctor wondered, had he failed to see disaster looming? His daughter, not yet fourteen, was what in Mexico is called a *guapa* and in America, a piece of ass. He saw it all now. The wonder was not that some starry-eyed Muslim kid had become smitten with his daughter, but that she didn't have a train of Hindus, Buddhists, Rastafarians, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unitarians, Falun Gongists, Mormons, Episcopalians, and Catholics slobbering after her as well. That was the downside of multiculturalism, Héctor thought bitterly. Perhaps, after all, the Villas ought never to have left Mexico, where life was socially less complicated. He drank more beer than was good for him and went to bed ahead of AveMaría, full of dread. And this was only the beginning! No sooner would he succeed in driving this *typo* off than the guy would be succeeded by another, and another, and another still—each and every one of them responding to that same primordial urge, each one after that single, so very basic thing that precedes every race and creed in the world. Well, he was going to leave it to Bro. Billy Joe—a real professional—to sort things out.

AveMaría, hoping for a second glimpse of Paradise when she drove Contracepción to work the next morning, was disappointed by the failure of Abdul (the girl had shyly confided her suitor's name after the father had gone early to bed the previous night) to make an appearance. All day she fretted, contemplating the coming scene she imagined for that evening when patriarch and prophet joined in righteous wrath against the scandalous liaison contracted between innocent girlhood and ardent youth. At four-thirty, anticipating Adbul's imminent delivery of Contracep, AveMaría swallowed a Lorazepam to quiet her nerves. Then, she went on to her daughter's bedroom, selected from the closet the most modest article of clothing she could find there, and laid the dress across the bed with a note pinned to the bosom: "Bro. B. Joe coming to see your Father tonite."

Dinner went off quietly, despite Héctor's glumness and the preacher's excessive volubility regarding his planned "Crusade for Souls" that winter. Immediately afterward, AveMaría sent Contracepción away with Dubya to give the child his bath while she followed the men into the den, ignoring their surprise at her joining them there. But when his wife gave no indication of leaving, Héctor plunged in, and, in less than five minutes, Bro. Billy Joe had heard the entire sordid story.

"So, what's a father to do?" he ended in a tragic voice.

The preacher sat dull-eyed, his plump hands crossed on his belly. Having dined heavily at AveMaría's table, he found himself unable to summon his usual alacrity of thought.

"Ah—shotgun marriage?" he suggested sluggishly.

"They haven't done anything yet!" AveMaría almost shrieked. "Contracepción is a virgin—I guarantee you that!"

"It was the boy's family I was thinking of, really. Islamists have a very rigid code of honor—you know, for unbelievers. And the two seem to have been dating for a couple of weeks now."

"My daughter can't possibly marry one of those people!" Héctor informed him passionately. "I'd rather see her dead first—almost. 'Kill the body but not the soul,' and so forth. Besides, the girl isn't fourteen yet!"

AveMaría had a flash of inspiration then—as blinding, she thought later, as the light that knocked Saint Paul off his horse.

"What if Abdul converts?" she cried.

Brother Billy Joe's eyelids had drooped as the conversation proceeded. Now they flapped wide open and the preacher pulled himself up straight in his chair.

"Why of course! Our Crusade for Souls! Contracepción must bring the kid with her to the very first meeting next month! First we save him, then we bring along the entire mosque—we convert everyone! It'll be a nationwide story, folks! Then, there's no question we can afford to put that new roof on the old dump!"

To Héctor, his wife looked to be on the verge of swooning—from sheer pleasure, it seemed to him. His own reaction to the catastrophe was coldly formal, wholly impersonal. If this was how the Man of God proposed to defeat his archenemy, Héctor thought, the First Assembly of God could not be long for this world. The same went for the Villa family, so far as he could tell. ◁



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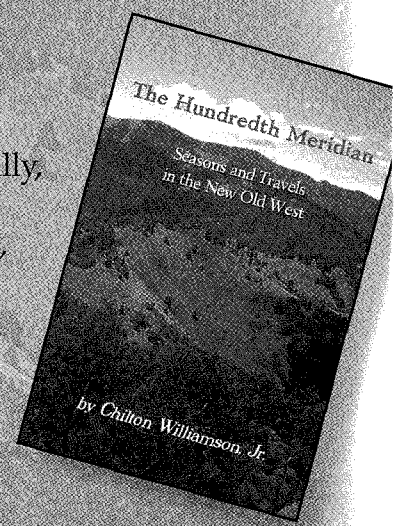


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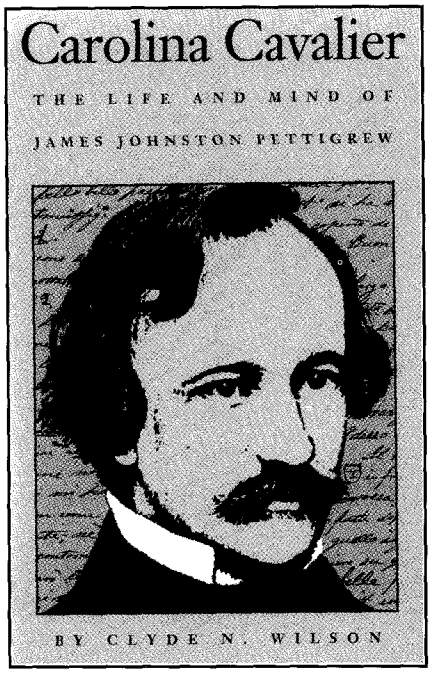


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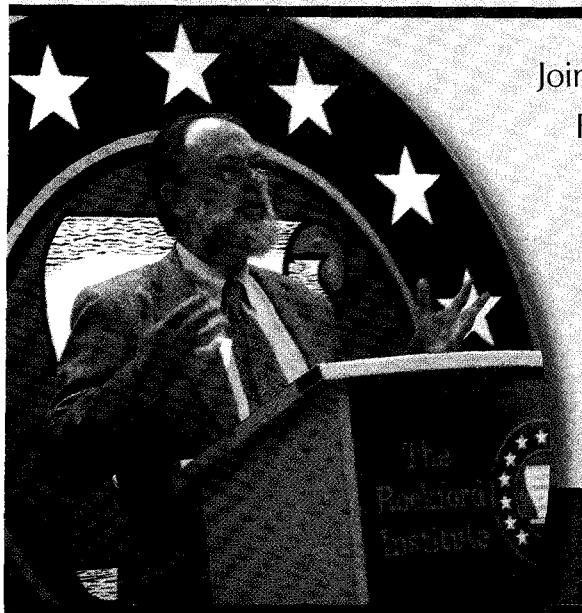

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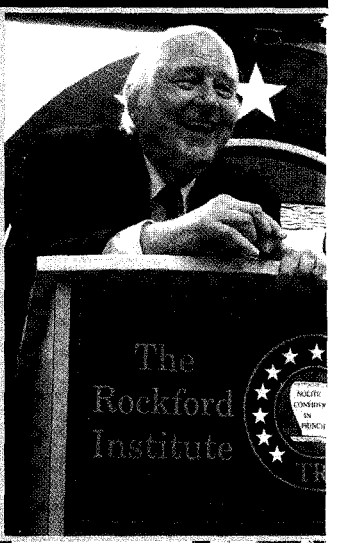

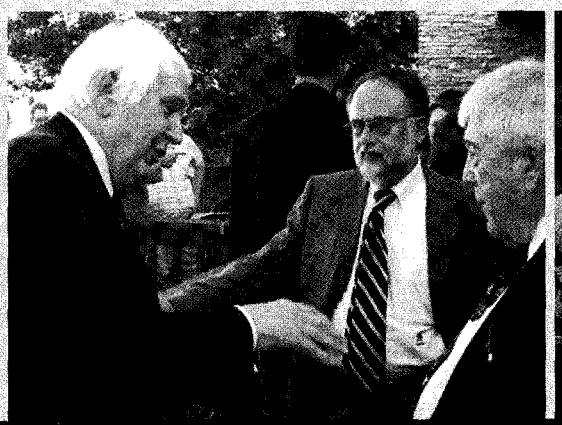

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